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#105

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COMICS INTERVIEW

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UP FRONT

In the issues leading up to #100, I asked for responses to a survey about COMICS INTERVIEW magazine. To my delight, a deluge of constructive criticism and creative feedback resulted. A representative selection of those responses appears here:

Would You Like to See COMICS INTERVIEW Bi-Weekly? Or More Pages Monthly at a Price Increase?

"Gulp! Dave, you're not serious, are you?"

"Bi-weekly? Sure, at a lower price. More pages monthly at $4.95? Hell no!"

"If it would mean a decrease in quality, which is normally what happens when a magazine goes bi-weekly, no."

"For my money, I'd like to see more pages in CI."

"I'd rather see as much packed into as few pages as is reasonable (or needed) on a monthly basis; a real value for my money!"

"Bi-weekly? YES! More pages monthly? YES!"

"Bi-weekly if you could swing it —"

"A bi-weekly schedule, in my opinion, would be likely to exacerbate my major grumbles due to pressure of production (I know how much hassle it is putting together a monthly magazine, let alone a bi-weekly). I would rather see more pages at a higher price, particularly if this gave you space to do more in-depth interviews."

"Bi-weekly? No, it would be too expensive and I have enough to read as it is with CI monthly."

"An extra buck seems like a small price to pay for more quality pages. This could be tricky. I'm sure a publication loses a percentage of readers when there is a price increase for whatever reasons. Although, getting more for the extra buck is a novel idea in this day and age when prices seem to rise with no increase in product output."

"I'd rather not see you go bi-weekly, but only because I have enough trouble trying to read all these comics and news magazines every month! Whether CI is $3.95 or $4.95 matters little to me."

"No to bi-weekly. Just by coming out on time on a monthly basis you guys have most comic books beat. No to more pages."

"I think the magazine's format and price are at the correct placement now."

*Next: **Do You Like Entire Issues Devoted to a Single Interview or Subject?***

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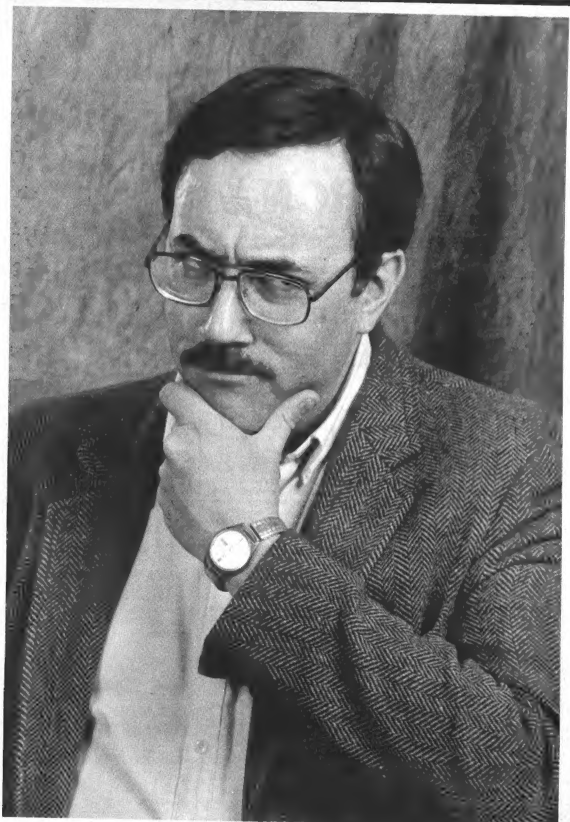
"It's essentially a history of Marvel Comics."



©1991 BETH GWINN

All artwork accompanying this interview ©1992 Marvel Entertainment Group. All rights reserved.

"The company published its first comic in 1939."

At about the same time as the media blitz started, the book started appearing in bookstores throughout the country — and disappearing just as quickly! It seems that non-comics fans are as interested in the history of Marvel comics as are the diehard comics readers! I first skimmed through the book at a local Waldenbooks and decided that it would be the ideal stocking-stuffer for this admitted Marvel zombie (admittedly, I would need a large *stocking). The local bookstore, which had several copies the first week, was soon sold out, and it appears that this is much more than a localized occurrence, as the book has now gone into a second printing. Author Les Daniels took time from his busy work schedule to talk about his experiences while researching and writing the book . . .*

CHARLES S. NOVINSKIE: *FIVE FABULOUS DECADES OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMICS — MARVEL is the official name of the book — tell us a little more about it.*

LES DANIELS: I wanted to simply call it MARVEL, but a sub-committee came up with the subtitle. It's essentially a history of Marvel Comics. Some people think that Marvel began in 1961 — when really it goes back much further. The company published its first comic in 1939 and had been around for years before that, publishing pulp magazines. I've tried to cover everything going back to the early '30s, with even a little history on how comics and pulp magazines first got started.

CHARLES: *Who came up with the idea for the book?*

LES: Actually, it was Marvel. I can't name a particular name — but I do know that they had been kicking the idea around for a few years. As you know, I interviewed a great number of people who have worked there over a period of time. **Jim Shooter** mentioned that, as

LES DANIELS

"The difficult thing about doing the book was

early as 1986, there had been talk of doing something like this in honor of the 25th anniversary of the new Marvel.

CHARLES: *Instead we ended up with the New Universe.* (Laughter.)

LES: I guess that was what they did for the 25th anniversary. Actually, I was called up — out of the blue! — and asked if I would be interested in doing the book. Apparently, someone was aware of the book that I had done twenty years ago on comics. The book was called COMIX and it's appalling to think that it's been twenty years since I've written it! At the time, it was one of the first books done about comic *books* as opposed to comic *strips*. And it was the first book to carry material besides the Golden Age stuff. I'm not sure if they were impressed with the book or the fact that I had already dealt with modern-day Marvel. I think they talked to a few other people, and they finally asked me would I do it, and I said, "yes."

knowing from the start that I could never cover it all."

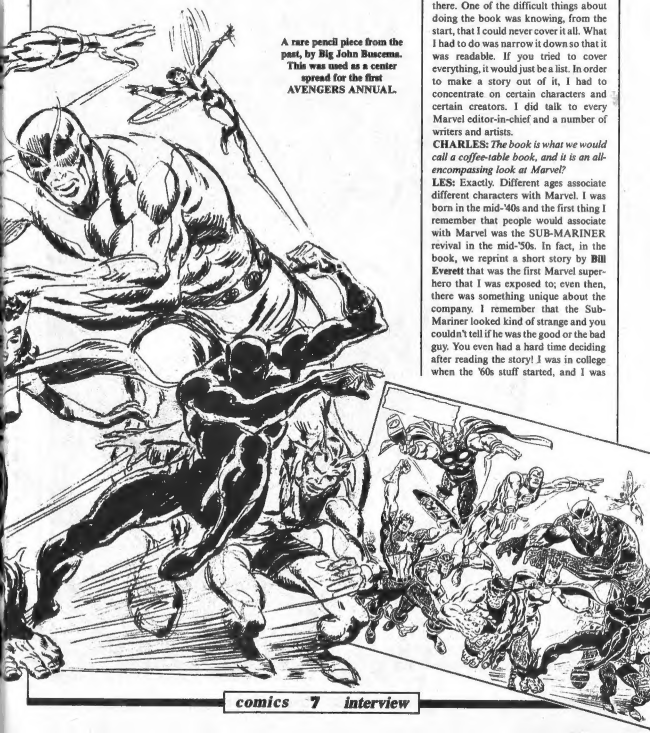
CHARLES: *How was the research and the thought process on this book different than, say, writing COMIX, twenty years ago?*

LES: COMIX was an attempt to cover the entire history of comics. There were chapters on Golden Age, undergrounds, Marvel, EC — stuff like that. Twenty years ago was a different era and there was very little literature on the subject and, in fact, there was very little being produced by fandom. It was an attempt to say, "Look, here's what has been done in the medium." I didn't sit down and talk to creators at great length or anything like that. This book — which is a longer book — is all about one company. I really tried to delve into the history and background. I interviewed dozens of people going back to people who worked at "Marvel" in the '30s and up through the present day.

I tried to capture what went on at Marvel. Even then, it's still impossible — there's so much that Marvel has done and so many people who have worked there. One of the difficult things about doing the book was knowing, from the start, that I could never cover it all. What I had to do was narrow it down so that it was readable. If you tried to cover everything, it would just be a list. In order to make a story out of it, I had to concentrate on certain characters and certain creators. I did talk to every Marvel editor-in-chief and a number of writers and artists.

CHARLES: *The book is what we would call a coffee-table book, and it is an all-encompassing look at Marvel?*

LES: Exactly. Different ages associate different characters with Marvel. I was born in the mid-'40s and the first thing I remember that people would associate with Marvel was the SUB-MARINER revival in the mid-'50s. In fact, in the book, we reprint a short story by **Bill Everett** that was the first Marvel superhero that I was exposed to; even then, there was something unique about the company. I remember that the Sub-Mariner looked kind of strange and you couldn't tell if he was the good or the bad guy. You even had a hard time deciding after reading the story! I was in college when the '60s stuff started, and I was



A rare pencil piece from the past, by Big John Buscema. This was used as a center spread for the first AVENGERS ANNUAL.

"I have a lot more appreciation for interviewers now."

interested again when I saw the Sub-Mariner on one of the covers of an early FANTASTIC FOUR.

CHARLES: *A book of such proportions obviously took many hours of research. When did you first start the project and how time-consuming was it?*

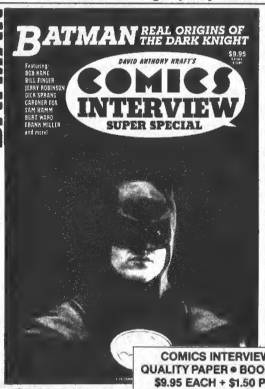
LES: I've done a lot of books, and have been writing professionally for over twenty years, and this book took the longest! I also worked the hardest on it; I worked close to two years on it. The interviews took a lot of time and I now have a lot more respect for people who do interviews. *(Laughter.)* I used to think that doing interviews was an easy way to be a writer; I found that it took a lot of time to set up the interviews and then I put a lot of time into researching the person I was to interview. I have a lot more appreciation for interviewers, especially the hard work with transcribing the interviews! Picture research was also time-consuming. One reviewer com-

Original cover rough, designed by Bill Everett, for an early issue of MARVEL MYSTERY COMICS, featuring The Sub-Mariner. This rough was never completed.

COMICS INTERVIEW SUPER SPECIALS

These deluxe bookshelf editions contain 120 pages each of all the inside info on your favorite characters and creators. All the interviews in COMICS INTERVIEW on these subjects are collated into a single quality-format sourcebook. Highly Recommended.

BATMAN



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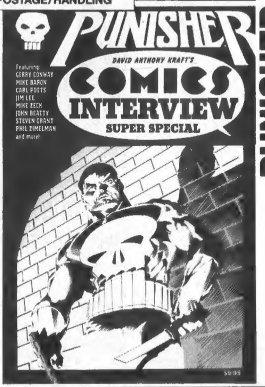

"Comics Interview Super Specials, Punisher, Batman, X-Men and — the piece de resistance — Masters of Marvel. I'd rate all of these as don't-miss items, particularly the last named. Grade: A." — *Don Thompson, COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE*

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"I remember talking to Lee, Buscema and Colan."

mented that I had access to all of Marvel's files — but Marvel doesn't *have* all of the stuff that made it into the book on file. It was necessary to go out and find copies of what we wanted to reprint.

CHARLES: *I remember ads in CBG and other places looking for photos and other Marvel memorabilia . . .*

LES: My editor ran that; they were looking for toys and stuff. I think I called something like fifty places, looking for the SUB-MARINER stuff that we reprinted.

CHARLES: *When you were researching the book, were there any things you found out that you didn't know about Marvel — or that surprised you?*

LES: Oh, certainly, especially the further I went back into Marvel's past. It's only been the more recent stuff that's been more fully documented. There was quite a bit of detective work involved. I remember talking to **Stan Lee** and he would mention the troubles they had in the '50s. I assumed he was referring to the Comics Code and the recession that followed. He did mean that — but he said that there was another time, which he couldn't remember, when it was or what the circumstances were; I was finally able to piece it together after talking to **John Buscema** and **Gene Colan.** They both talked about an earlier time, when times were tough. As it turns out, they were referring to when **Martin Goodman,** the publisher, started calling the company Atlas. At that time, **Goodman** shut down the Bullpen and put all of the artists on freelance basis. No one actually told me this, but all of the pieces just fell into place. Other interesting things cropped up: For instance, I ran into **Will Murray** and he had found an old pulp that they had published back in '37 or something and there was a character called the "X" Man. Stan said he didn't remember it, or anything about it, when they started the X-MEN up —

— REACHING OUT TO THIS MAIMED CREATURE, PERHAPS HIS BEST TO ERASE ITS HURT.
I'M SORRY, SCARLET...
STARE NOT IN VAIN!
HIS GRIP ALONE IS ENOUGH TO CRUSH WITH MORE YET TO BE ENDURED... SHE MUST FIND AND DESTROY THE INSTRUMENT... BEARE THAT SHE DOES NOT LOOK UPON...
HE WILL NOT FAIL HER.
SCARLET! NO!
LINUS... SHARLA!!
I FEEL SO EMPTY INSIDE... WHERE'S CHEYLA? I REMEMBER... I REMEMBER EVERYTHING... I'VE BORED A HOLE THROUGH MY HEART...
I'M NOT SURE WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME... BUT I'M NOT THE SAME PERSON I WAS... I'VE LOST MY MEMORY... I'VE LOST MY WORLD... I'VE LOST EVERYTHING... I'VE LOST MY GESTURE...
OOOOH!
HAVEN'T YOU ALREADY HURT ENOUGH?

Here's an unpublished pencil page from the original ending of the Dark Phoenix Saga, by John Byrne (script by Claremont). This is one of the many rare pieces to be found in THE MARVEL BOOK by Les Daniels.

COMICS INTERVIEW SUPER SPECIALS

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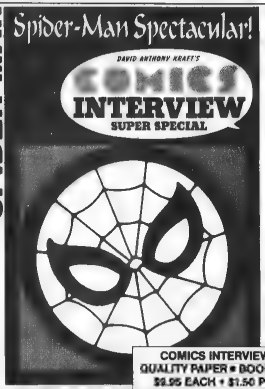

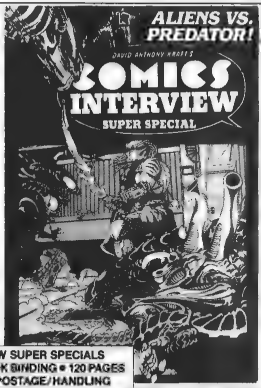

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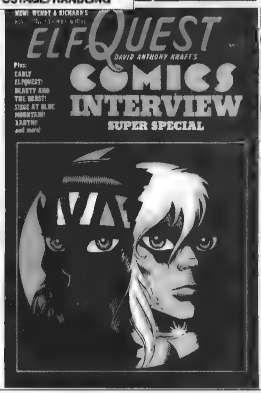

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"It was a pleasure to talk to people you would

so I think it was just coincidence. The great thing about doing the book was getting to talk to all of these people and to dig around for interesting stories.

CHARLES: *Were there any embarrassing moments when working on the book?*

LES: *(Laughter.)* Sure, quite a few. I do have to say that even though doing the book was difficult, it was also a pleasure. As you know, you get paid to talk to people that you would be interested in talking to — even if you weren't getting paid.

CHARLES: *What era of Marvel history*

the X-MEN
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Here are two unpublished X-MEN covers by Werner Roth and Dick Ayers, along with yet another unused cover from the past, this one FANTASTIC FOUR's introduction of the Black Panther. Pencils, Jack Kirby.

want to talk to even if you weren't getting paid."

did you find the most fascinating?

LES: Not having lived through the earlier stuff, of course, it was more interesting to me. To some extent, that's my nostalgia. I was in college when the new Marvel started and, at that point, I was interested in what they were doing; at the same time, I was starting to collect stuff that they were doing from the '40s and '50s. Someone said that everyone's Golden Age is from when you were a kid. I was also fascinated in seeing how the company pulled itself up from being tiny in the '50s and the '60s to what it is today. Back then, it was just one room with **Stan Lee** and his secretary, **Flo Steinberg!**

CHARLES: *A lot of the younger readers, who don't go as far back as you or me, assume that Marvel just started out being number one.*

LES: True. Marvel had a big boom in the '40s and into the '50s and then they went down in the late '50s, like everyone did. It's amazing that they hung on, because so many of the big publishers that I remember from when I was growing up are gone now.

CHARLES: *What's fascinating is the*

"I didn't think that I could be so amused and

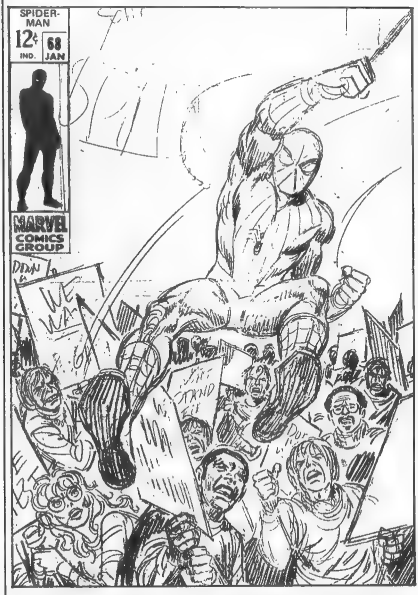
fact that nearly everyone who has ever been involved in comics has at one time or another worked for Marvel.

LES: That's fairly true. Once again, I couldn't concentrate on everyone that has worked there. I reprinted some of the **Harvey Kurtzman** stuff, because he worked for them before he worked for EC and before starting MAD.

CHARLES: *I know that you've interviewed dozens of people. But, were there any that really stood out?*

LES: Honestly, they were all terrific. I didn't think that I could be so amused and entertained by so many. Everyone was fun to interview and it seems that in all of the cases we ended up laughing about something, sooner or later. I talked to **Stan Lee** more than anyone because he is, in a sense, Mr. Marvel — not just because only of what he has accomplished, but because he has been there for almost the entire history of the company! Since getting out of high school, the only time Stan hasn't worked there was a few years during World War II. Stan was extremely helpful and informative. One person who was very interesting, because people are less aware of his contributions, is **Vince Fago.** He was editor-in-chief while Stan was away in the army during the war; he was probably the one person that very few people were aware of. We all know that **Joe Simon** was the first editor, and then Stan, and then, after that, **Roy Thomas,** and then so on and so on. **Fago** was in charge for several years — and he was fascinating to talk with. I'm not trying to single him out because so many people were great to talk to; in this case, I felt like it was a facet of information that wasn't readily available or known about.

CHARLES: *I think the best thing about the book is that you were able to document so much of the early days while these people are still with us. It's nice to have this history of the Marvel Universe while the information can still be gotten first-hand. You hope that you can gain some new insight or a different*



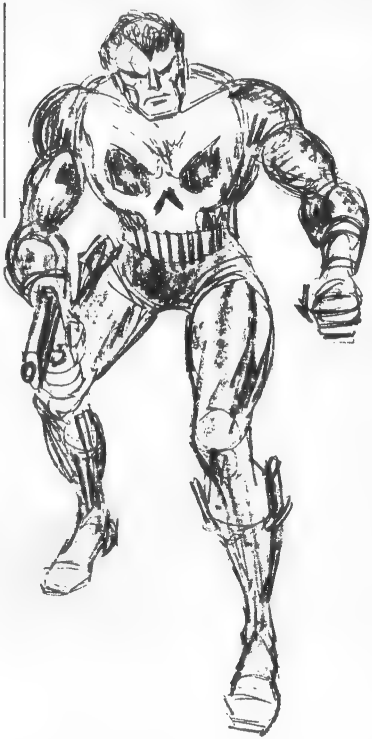
entertained by so many. Everyone was fun to interview."

perspective by talking with these people.

LES: I hope that's true with everyone — that I got something new out of them. It's hard, when some of them have been interviewed so many times. I went as far back as talking with **Jerry Perles,** the lawyer who worked with **Martin Goodman;** that was during a period before there was a Marvel Comics. I worked my way up to the present day with people like **Frank Miller** and **Todd McFarlane.** Some were phone interviews, others I did in person; they were all fun.

CHARLES: *So far it appears that the book has been heavily marketed.*

LES: I think that they've done a good job. Both Abrams, who published it, and



Three by John Romita. The first, a pencilled rough for an AMAZING SPIDER-MAN cover, #68. The next two are the original character designs for Wolverine and the Punisher.

"I wanted it readable to people who weren't experts and

on Marvel's end. Marvel sent Stan out to a certain extent and he has become the spokesperson. He talked to **Larry King** and was on GOOD MORNING AMERICA. I've talked to a lot of people, from yourself to the NEW YORK TIMES.

CHARLES: *How is the book being distributed?*

LES: I'm not an authority on this, but it is being sent to bookstores as a regular book through regular distribution channels. I think there is also another direct-sales marketing thing going on. The important thing is that it is not *just* a book for the comics shops. We wanted to get this to the general public, to people who normally wouldn't go into a comics store, but might remember the stuff from years ago, if they see it in a bookstore. I tried to write the book so that people who are really fans would find some information as well as entertainment in the book; at the same time, I wanted to make it readable to people who weren't experts and didn't read every issue of COMICS INTERVIEW. The idea was to try and reach people who haven't kept up with comics but maybe read them twenty or thirty years ago. A lot of my friends — not all of them comics fans — have looked through the book and have said, "Oh, I remember that from when I

who didn't read every issue of COMICS INTERVIEW."

Collage (detail) by Tom Morehouse.

was a kid." The book is an attempt to make comics seem more legitimate or important to people who don't necessarily spend a lot of time thinking about them. The publishers of the book normally publish books about artists involved with the fine arts — so that helps. I also think that the layout and design by **David Vogler** and **David Kaestle** was well done. The book looks beautiful. Most of my other books are novels. Something like the Marvel book I can pick up and enjoy looking at the photos and the layout. Even though I picked out most of the illustrations, it's different and enjoyable seeing them all together in the book.

CHARLES: *The book is well organized and presented. The first thing I noticed was the wonderful Spider-Man dustjacket — it just jumps out at you!*

LES: John Romita, Sr. did that. He also did the two-page spreads that open each chapter in the book. **Romita** was another interesting person who I enjoyed speaking with during the course of researching the book. The book was a lot of fun to do and I think that anyone interested in comics or Marvel will enjoy it. I hope to reach a wider audience than just the comics fans in an effort to educate them in the understanding that comics are an important part of our culture. □

A rare glimpse of the complete Stroman/ Milgrom artwork used for the upper left-hand (corner) cover section. Uncropped and at original size.

"The mutant books get the greatest attention from fans."

I do any more interviews with Peter David, he and I will have to do a joint appearance to prove we are not the same person. In this, our third chat for COMICS INTERVIEW, Peter and I discuss his latest assignment, writing the all-new version of Marvel's X-FACTOR.

PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL: *How do you view the opportunity of taking on one of the mutant books?*

PETER DAVID: I look forward to it basically for two reasons. Number one: people who enjoy my work — both of them — have said to me, on numerous occasions, "Gee, we think it would be really great if you did a mutant book," as if it's my choice.

Fans seem to have the impression that I can just go waltzing into an editor's office and say, "I'm of a mind to do a mutant book. Assign me one."

PAT: *On the other hand, there are people who can do that . . .*

PETER: . . . but I'm not one of them. Generally, you have to be able to draw.

So, it was a very pleasant surprise when **Bob Harras** approached me about taking on X-FACTOR. At last, those people who had been saying, "Why don't you take on a mutant book? We'd love to see what you would do with it," are finally getting what they would like.

By the same token, purely on the basis of career advancement, the books that focus the mutant characters are the ones that get the greatest attention from the fan base. X-MEN, X-FACTOR, these are the ones that people don't miss, because they feel that's where the heart and soul, the real action of the Marvel Universe is. Whereas there are still plenty of people who don't know me from a hole in the wall because they don't read HULK, they will now gain some familiarity with my work through X-FACTOR. So, I look forward to the chance to expand my audience base as it were.

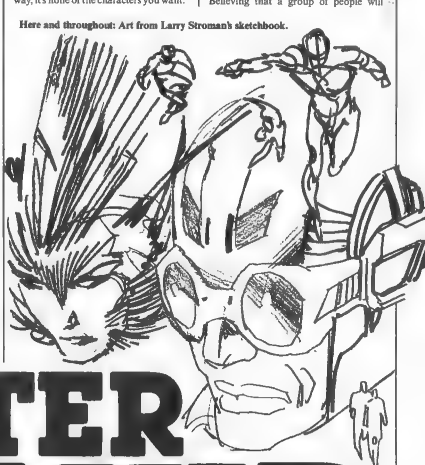
PAT: *The new X-Factor is who? And were they handed to you — or did you choose the line-up?*

PETER: These people were handed to me. It was not so much a matter of "OK — You're going to write X-FACTOR and here's who you're going to have, whether you like it or not," as it was "Would you be interested in writing X-FACTOR with these characters?" That's a bit of a difference. The way you put it, it sounds like "You wanna write X-FACTOR?" "Sure, great." "By the way, it's none of the characters you want."

The line-up is going to be Havok, Lorna Dane, Guido, the Multiple Man, Wolfsbane, and — as a surprise guest — Quicksilver, which I'm quite pleased about.

Originally, Legion was going to be in the group, and we had a slight problem. I was extremely uncomfortable with the thought of Legion in the group simply because Legion is a story in and of himself . . . and comfortably working him into a group in some way that wasn't utterly contrived was something I had a great deal of difficulty with. I don't mind building a story around him, but working him into a group — you're really asking for a bit much from the reader. Believing that a group of people will

Here and throughout: Art from Larry Stroman's sketchbook.



PETER DAVID

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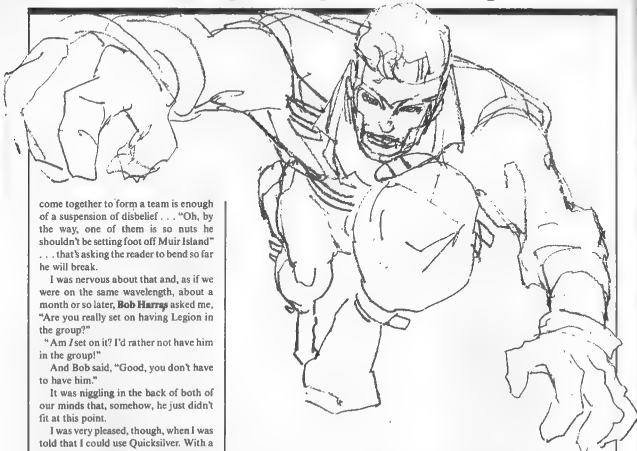
"X-Factor is a group with a point of view imposed on it."



come together to form a team is enough of a suspension of disbelief . . . "Oh, by the way, one of them is so nuts he shouldn't be setting foot off Muir Island" . . . that's asking the reader to bend so far he will break.

I was nervous about that and, as if we were on the same wavelength, about a month or so later, **Bob Harras** asked me, "Are you really set on having Legion in the group?"

"Am *I* set on it? I'd rather not have him in the group!"

And Bob said, "Good, you don't have to have him."

It was niggling in the back of both of our minds that, somehow, he just didn't fit at this point.

I was very pleased, though, when I was told that I could use Quicksilver. With a group, you generally want a character who will be a sore point, someone who can stir things up.

PAT: *The irritant, the pebble in the shoe . . .*

PETER: Exactly. I loved the idea of Quicksilver; of all the characters in either the Marvel or DC universe who are arrogant, I can think of exactly two who have a right to be — one is Namor, the other is Quicksilver. And perhaps Quicksilver has more reason to be than Namor.

PAT: *Why do you think Quicksilver has a right to be arrogant?*

PETER: Think about it this way: Have you ever gone into a post office, stood in line, and the postal clerk was incompetent? Or gone to McDonald's, and the people don't understand the words "Big Mac"? What is your general feeling in those situations? You generally feel impatient. You feel irritated. Have you ever stood in the post office behind a woman with 20 packages who wants to know every single way she can send them to Africa? It drives you nuts! You think to yourself, "Why the I have to put up with this? These people are so slow, they're costing me time, and it's so damned irritating. I wish I didn't have to put up with this." Now — imagine that the *entire world* was like that . . . except for you.

To Quicksilver, just having a conversation is irritating. My feeling is, if this guy can move really fast, then he can move really fast. I'm not dealing with superspeed on a physical level, which is what everyone always seems to focus on — what **Mark Gruenwald** did so well with D.P. 7 or what they're doing more now in FLASH. I'm dealing with accelerated speed from the mental aspect; to Quicksilver, as he said in an issue of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN many, many moons ago, the rest of the world is moving in slow motion. That must really, really get on your nerves.

Quicksilver lives in a world filled with people who don't know how to use cash machines, and want to know all the ways to send packages to Africa, and can never get your order right in a Burger King unless you repeat it several times. That would tend to make you feel very superior to everyone and very impatient with everyone. He has just as much right to feel that way as you and I do to feel irritated by people who don't know how to use a cash machine.

I find him a really intriguing character from that point of view. Of course, from the point of view of the rest of X-Factor, the reaction is, "Oh yeah, well fuck you!" *(Laughter.)* It's not like the rest of the team will say, "OK, I understand . . ." Quicksilver has such a singular point of view I love it.

PAT: *As you said, it's often difficult to come up with a reason for a group of heroes to come together: The Fantastic Four are a family; the Avengers are a social group cum police battalion; the X-Men are fighting for justice for mutants. Why is X-Factor together? What is their point of view?*

PETER: This is interesting: X-Factor is a group having a point of view imposed upon them. Which should create some friction. Essentially, they are a government group. They are a strike force, in the same way that Delta Force is. They're the government's answer to the X-Men. If there's a specific situation in which it's appropriate to use a government strike force, they send in X-Factor.

"The members of X-Factor have lives outside the group."

They are salaried; they don't all live in some great big headquarters, like the Avengers or the Fantastic Four. I always loved that: Have them all grouped together so a villain can come and nuke them! *(Laughter.)* I never did understand that!

The various members of X-Factor, just like the various members of the FBI or CIA have their own homes they go to at night; they have social lives outside of the group. To them, "it's not just an adventure — it's a job." *(Laughter.)* That's not a bad tag line, now that I think of it.

PAT: *They're sort of a replacement for Freedom Force?*

PETER: X-Factor will be Freedom Force — but with pleasant-smelling breath and good posture. *(Laughter.)*

PAT: *Who ropes them into this and how do they do it?*

PETER: It's a combination of Professor X, Cyclops and Val Cooper. Cooper is especially enthused about this because, as she says in the book, she's so tired of her FBI agent brother talking about the exciting things he's doing — like the weird murder of the girl wrapped in plastic. *(Laughter.)*

PAT: *In addition, she's now working with people who have a legitimate background as heroes — as opposed to most of Freedom Force.*

PETER: As opposed to the scuzzballs. It's Freedom Force — except you wouldn't be embarrassed to be seen in public with them. These are people you can have a press conference with and be reasonably sure they won't embarrass you.

PAT: *Will they have code names?*

PETER: Oh yeah. The one I had trouble with a code name for is Guido. I was trying to come up with a decent one and I think I finally hit on one. Strong Guy.

Havok will tell him he needs a code name, and Guido will see very little reason for that and have very little patience for it. "OK, you come up with something." Havok will say, "It's not my job. Just come up with something that reflects that you're the group strong guy."

And Guido answers, "OK, I'll call myself Strong Guy."

"No, you can't call yourself that," Havok argues. And Guido responds, "Why not? What could make it more clear than that?"

I try and bring a fresh perspective to mutants.

This is why they don't let *me* write all the mutant books. How would I have the X-Men pick their teams? It would be like gym — everybody would stand in a

"It's easy to find comics that bore you or don't surprise

group, there'd be two team captains, and they'd choose their teams. And there'd be one poor schmoe standing in back, saying, "I *know* I'm going to be last . . ." That would be me. If I were a mutant, I would be the last one picked.

PAT: *Who would that be?*

PETER: I figure it would be Jubilee . . . not that I dislike the character, but she has the weakest power and she would get on my nerves the fastest. "Geez, we've got Boom-Boom, what do we need her for?" Actually, it's a shame Doug Ramsey's dead, because he would be the obvious odd man out. He'd be the equipment manager.

PAT: *How is it going for you?*

PETER: Basically, I'm feeling my way. This is the first time in years where I've started on a book. I've been writing HULK for five years; even when I just started writing STAR TREK, that was a snap — I just had to step into characters I'd known for two decades. This is the first time in ages I'm starting fresh on a book, which is always a really scary experience.

When I come on a book, my attitude is not to come in with a bunch of large-scale plots, Kree-Skrull wars, time-travel, tying up outstanding plotlines that have been hanging around for 15 years. I feel there's nothing unique to the book if you come up with a generic plot and just plug in these characters.

I try to get a feeling for the characters and work from within, try to develop stories that would be the most interesting and involving for these characters. As a result, I have a storyline developing from Jame Madrox having his bodies killed off; or dealing with things that affect Quicksilver's speed; and Wolfsbane's fascination and devotion to Havok and how that affects Havok's relationship with Lorna. That's where I find the meat of the story to start with.

PAT: *The other thing you're writing on a regular basis is HULK. In the past year, you have completed conceivably the most radical change in that character in his 30-year existence. There have been all kinds of variations on the Hulk.*

PETER: Most of the changes run in on the Hulk have been from external forces: "He's got a bullet in his head." "The Leader's subjected him to radiation and he can't change." And now he's this, now he's that, now he's some other thing. It was always an outside force acting on the Hulk. It made him the ping-pong ball of the Marvel Universe — "What shall we do to the Hulk *this* month?" What new thing can we inflict on this character and screw around with the basics of the concept?

I basically work from the other direction, inside-out. Doesn't necessarily make me any better, just different.

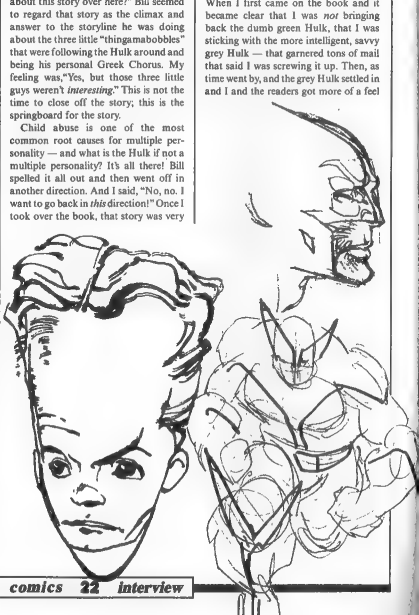
PAT: *You based part of your revamp on Bill Mantlo's suggestion, several years back, that Bruce Banner was an abused child. You worked from there, asking, "What happens to abused children?"*

PETER: Bill Mantlo did this wonderful story that set up Bruce as an abused child and implied that the potential for the Hulk was there all along and the gamma bomb just released it. I thought this was incredible fodder for a series of stories — and then Bill never did anything with it! I couldn't understand it — he went off in another direction. "No, no, wait — what about this story over here?" Bill seemed to regard that story as the climax and answer to the storyline he was doing about the three little "thingamabobbles" that were following the Hulk around and being his personal Greek Chorus. My feeling was, "Yes, but those three little guys weren't *interesting*." This is not the time to close off the story; this is the springboard for the story.

Child abuse is one of the most common root causes for multiple personality — and what is the Hulk if not a multiple personality? It's all there! Bill spelled it all out and then went off in another direction. And I said, "No, no. I want to go back in *this* direction!" Once I took over the book, that story was very much a guiding force for me in terms of the direction I went. It was always present in the writing, even when it wasn't a major plot element. It was a plot element finally around #376-377; that's when it really came to the fore — but it was always part of the Hulk's persona, once I started the book. If you go back and re-read the stuff, you will find that there are always little allusions and references to what happened to Bruce Banner as a child, references made both by Bruce and by the Hulk.

PAT: *Have the long-time Hulk fans objected to what you're doing?*

PETER: Of course — we've been getting letters like that since I started on the book. There's always going to be someone who says I'm ruining the Hulk. When I first came on the book and it became clear that I was *not* bringing back the dumb green Hulk, that I was sticking with the more intelligent, savvy grey Hulk — that garnered tons of mail that said I was screwing it up. Then, as time went by, and the grey Hulk settled in and I and the readers got more of a feel



you, but to find comics that royally piss you off is difficult."

for the character, people started saying, "Hey, I *like* the grey Hulk"; some of that, of course, was because the hard-core green Hulk fans left.

And, once everyone was happy with the grey Hulk, I brought back the green one. Now came the deluge of letters that said, "You're screwing it up! How dare you bring back the dumb green Hulk!" Then I had *both* of them running around . . . and now I had letters arguing for or against both of them. When I integrated them with Bruce, I got letters arguing for the return of one or the other version of the Hulk and a handful of letters that said, "Gee, I like what you're doing." Controversy is no stranger.

PAT: *Given that sales on HULK have steadily improved all the time you've been writing it, can we assume the letter writers are not necessarily representative of the readership as a whole?*

PETER: You can look at in in several ways. I figure that the people who like the book read it and recommend it to their friends. The people who are outraged by what I've done, pick it up each month to see how much more outraged they can get. It's easy to find comics that bore you or don't surprise you, but to find comics that royally piss you off is really difficult. Considering how many people complained about **Claremont's** version of X-MEN, I figured Chris's secret was pissing people off.

PAT: *Most writers fool around with the Hulk because they get tired of the version they were handed. Do you think the day will come when you will be burned out on the character and want to move on?*

PETER: If I ever reach the point where I think I have nothing to say, I'll move on.

Since I started on the book, this is what I have been building toward . . . but I had to work a long time at it. I wanted to make the grey Hulk as much of an individual personality as I could, so the reader could feel something for him. I knew once I got to the point where I reintegrated the personalities, it would have to be a one-issue story — or else it would lose the dramatic impact. As it is, some people say it went too fast.

"I hope five years from now I will have been able to have

LARRY STROMAN

Artist Larry Stroman, originally from the Boston area, attributes his training to no one place in particular. Various courses in art schools and spending most of his adult life hanging out in libraries and museums make up the collective styles evident in Stroman's work. Currently, Stroman's work can be seen in Marvel's X-FACTOR comic written by Peter David. So far, the combined talents of Peter David and Larry Stroman have made for interesting

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done my own comics. I hope to continue to be an artist."

Illustration by Larry Stroman with inks by Art Thibert.

"I made a living as a draftsman for a couple of years. I

reading that makes X-FACTOR just a little different from the other mutant titles.

PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL: *How did it feel coming onto a book like X-FACTOR in which all of the characters, visually speaking, had been well established ahead of time? There really wasn't a chance for you to do a new take on the characters.*

LARRY STROMAN: That's what I did anyway. The reason it was so attractive for me to do the book was that when I got the offer I was only supposed to do only a few fill-in issues and then I was offered it on a regular basis. I said sure, but what do I get to do on the book? They told me that they were taking characters that had never had much done with them before and making them X-FACTOR. So I asked what do I do as far as costumes and they told me to do whatever I want. In that instance, I was working with characters that didn't have much exposure. It's almost like starting a whole new book.

PAT: *The first place I remember seeing your work was on ALIEN LEGION. What did you do before that?*

LARRY: I don't remember much before that, I just know that the first thing I had published was a two-part WORLD'S FINEST story. I don't even remember the issue numbers. After that I did some back-up stuff for AMERICAN FLAGG. That only lasted a few issues and then ALIEN LEGION came shortly after that.

PAT: *Were you interested in comics as a kid?*

LARRY: I had always been interested in comics, but I wasn't able to afford it until I was around 12 years old. Previously to that I would read the books my brother

moved to New York and did portraits for a few years."

would give me or whatever my friends would lend me.

PAT: *When you started working as an artist, were your goals set towards being a comic artist or did you have some other goals?*

LARRY: Yes, it was definitely to become a comics artist, but I became sidetracked by a lot of other stuff around the same time. I made a living as a draftsman for a couple of years. I moved to New York and did portraits for a few years.

PAT: *When you receive a plot or script, what's the first thing you do?*

LARRY: The first thing to do is get the first page done. I usually do the first page and then the last one. Why? I don't know, it's like, nothing comes before the first page or after the last page. It's always hard to finish the last few pages of a story. You've been working on a story for several weeks and you get down to the last few pages and it's sometimes a struggle to finish them. I usually do the last several pages first and then fill in the middle. It's a weird way of working, but that's the way I work. It drives the editor and writer crazy because because they never get the pages in proper sequence.

PAT: *How do you deal with the pacing of the story?*

LARRY: In terms of?

PAT: *In terms of the imaging of the storytelling.*

LARRY: It has nothing to do with storytelling, it's just the last image or page of the story. Regardless of what you draw first, you're always going to end up with the same drawings on the page. That's why you do preliminary sketches of characters. So that by the end of the story you know what they'll look like. With a lot of people it's easy for them to start drawing and then end up at the end of the book. When you work that way

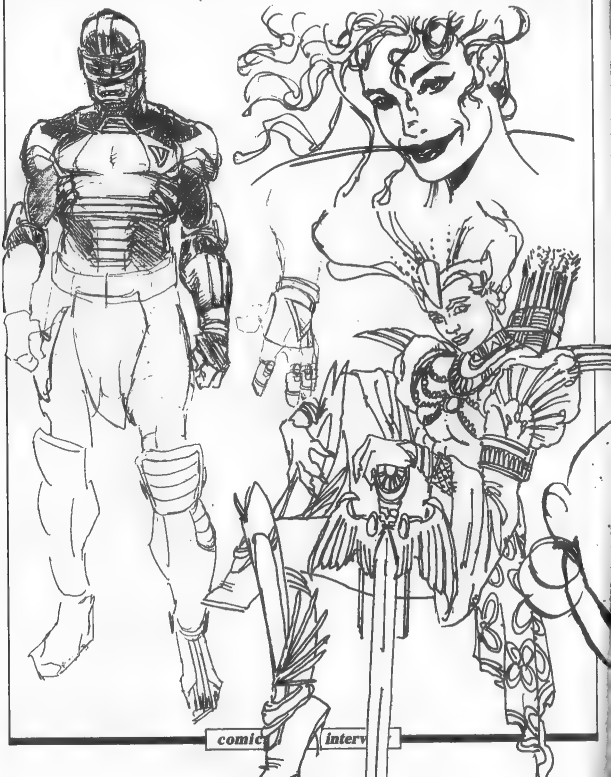
Example of Larry's pencil work (note the various guest-star faces).

"A lot of the times when writers write, they don't

you end up concentrating on drawing what you like and then by the last four of five pages you have to draw a lot of tiny panels because you've disregarded what has happened with the rest of the story. What I do is use the first several pages and then the last several to do those really wild layouts and then focus on the story in between. That way, it doesn't look as if I've rushed the last couple of pages or had to force something into the final pages.

PAT: *Do you prefer working with plots or full scripts?*

LARRY: Definitely plots. It allows you do to your own pacing. A lot of times when writers write, they sometimes don't consider that they write more than you can fit into the page restraints that you have for the story. When I get a plot, I can determine how many images I can fit



consider that they write more than can fit into the page."

on a particular page.

PAT: *Some people have commented that since you and Peter David have taken over X-FACTOR, there hasn't been the typical Marvel slug-fests. Do you find that a problem from an artist's viewpoint?*

LARRY: That, to me, was one of the more attractive things about the book, the fact that it hasn't started off with everyone fighting. We're starting off the book by establishing the characters first. With most comics, you can go six issues before you find out enough information about any of these characters. This book starts out with characterizations that will lead up to all of the fighting.

PAT: *This sounds as if you're the type of artist that cares about the types of stories that comics can tell. Do you have anything in particular that you would*

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"I never really enjoyed writing. I may at some point."

like to do story-wise somewhere down the line?

LARRY: Not necessarily. I have enjoyed most of the stories I have been given so far. Being able to work with the different writers is also good because they all have different approaches. All of it is just an experience anyway.

PAT: *Do you have any thoughts of ever writing and drawing?*

LARRY: I don't know. I've never really enjoyed writing. I may at some point — although I haven't seen too many examples of an artist doing his writing and doing a good job of it — the writing. I think you should focus on what you're good at. At the same time, the reason a lot of these guys, artists, are writing is that they're not pleased with the stories the writers are giving them. In that sense, the writer should pay more attention to the work that we, the artists, have to put into the book.

PAT: *An artist once said to me that a writer can describe, in a couple of words, a huge crowd scene with plenty of people, and it doesn't take any longer than for a writer to describe a scene with two people in a room, but the work of the artist is more difficult, more time-consuming.*

LARRY: Right, if I get a story that says, Page 1, such and such walks through a crowd of a hundred people, it's a very short statement, but I, in turn, have to draw 100 separate people. I can't draw each person the same so it becomes time-consuming and I only have a certain amount of time to draw a story. I have to ask myself, if I draw the page without the 100 people, will it affect how the rest of the book works? The major problem we have to deal with constantly is what it is we have to focus on to make the story work best. That's why there can be major conflicts between artists and writers. A lot of times the writer gets upset because the artist didn't properly interpret what he wrote. A lot of times the artist will do what he has to do in order to get the book done on time.

PAT: *Have you ever worked with a writer who tried to give you thumbnails, things like that?*

LARRY: Mike Baron is the only one that I've ever got a story from that has done that. It really doesn't matter if I get thumbnails or not, I'm still going to end up drawing what I draw anyway. In a sense, it's like extra work for the writer.

These are referred to as "warm-ups," done quickly and loosely, again from Larry's sketchbook.

"I went from science fiction to superheroes—what the next

PAT: *Some writers say that they do thumbnails because it helps them pace the story. It helps them not over-write the story.*

LARRY: Some people work different ways and some people like being given as much info as possible to work with. Others enjoy having a minimum amount of information.

PAT: *Looking at the vast range of characters and material being published in comics today, is there anything in particular that you say, gee, I'd really like to do something like that? Either characters, or a genre.*

LARRY: In terms of genre, I'm sure I'll end up doing all of these different things anyway. It's a slow process, I went from a science-fiction book to a superhero book. What the next thing will be I don't know. In the meantime, I'm just trying to have fun. I want to learn and expand as I go along. I can't say that there is any one particular book that I would like to do.

PAT: *Is there anyone's work that you particularly admire?*

LARRY: Sure, plenty of guys. **Javier Saltares, Mark Texiera, Dennis Cowan.** I have a good friend, a cartoonist, **Chuck Fraser,** he's just getting into comics. **Hannibal King,** another friend, **Keith Williams,** and **Garcia Lopez,** really too many to name.

PAT: *That's a very eclectic group of people.*

thing will be, I don't know. I'm just trying to have fun."

LARRY: Yeah, but that's my taste. People have found it odd that I haven't focussed on one artist. If you were to ask me the same question a year from now I'd probably give you an entirely different answer. I went through my phases of all the big names in the business. It's just whoever I feel is doing good work at the present time. I'm not particular of the style. If it's a good style then I like it.

PAT: *What strikes you first when you look at someone's work? Is it the surface elements of the inking or maybe the underlying draftsmanship of the storytelling?*

LARRY: With each person it's a completely different thing. Some people are good at design, others at architecture or costume design. I admire each person for their separate strong points. That's why I've never had an all-time favorite artist.

PAT: *Where do you see yourself in five years?*

LARRY: I have no idea. *(Laughter.)*

PAT: *What would Larry Stroman like to be doing in five years?*

LARRY: I don't know. Hopefully, by that time I will have been able to have done my own comics and to have worked with all of the writers whose work I admire. I just hope to continue to be a comic artist and to be a little better than I am right now. Hopefully I'll have learned something over that period of time and continue to enjoy myself.

COMICS INTERVIEW 100 QUIZ

Q1 What did the Catholic Legion of Decency object to about Robin's costume on television?

A1 They said he had too big a bulge in his tights.

Q2 What was the original title of the newspaper comic strip that was later titled POPEYE?

A2 Thimble Theatre

Q3 What does the acronym T.H.U.N.D.E.R. stand for in T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS comics?

A3 The Higher United Nations Defense Enforcement Reserves

Q4 In the 1970s, who was the first alternative (not underground) comic-book publisher?

A4 Mike Friedrich's Star*Reach Publishing

Q5 What now-deceased actor played Kato in the 1960s TV series, THE GREEN HORNET?

A5 Bruce Lee

Q6 What Marvel comics character is associated with writer Ken Kesey in Tom Wolfe's novel, THE ELECTRIC KOOL-AID ACID TEST?

A6 Dr. Strange

Q7 What Golden Age comic book writer went on to write the famed science-fiction novel, THE STARS, MY DESTINATION?

A7 Alfred Bester

Q8 What world-famous author did the French hire to write a screenplay for a LITTLE NEMO animated feature which was never produced?

A8 Ray Bradbury

Q9 What did the letters DC in DC Comics originally stand for?

A9 Detective Comics

Q10 What was the first name Walt Disney originally planned to use for Mickey Mouse?

A10 Mortimer

Q11 What physiological trait did Disney artists give Mickey Mouse for the first time in "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" from FANTASIA?

A11 Pupils around his black-dot eyes

Q12 What was the name of the town that Rocky and Bullwinkle hailed from?

A12 Frostbite Falls, Minnesota

Q 13 What live-action TV series was Hanna-Barbera's THE FLINTSTONES based on?

A 13 The Honeymooners

Q 14 What were the weaknesses of the Golden and Silver Age Green Lanterns' power rings?

A 14 Wood and the color yellow

Q 15 What Marvel superhero did the British rock group The Kinks write a song about?

A 15 Captain America

Q 16 Which Hollywood matinee idol was an inspiration for Captain Marvel's facial appearance?

A 16 Fred MacMurray

Q 17 Which Sean Connery film was adapted into comics as an issue of DC's SHOWCASE?

A 17 Dr. No

Q 18 Which high-flying hero came to America and assumed the identity of a dead Russian?

A 18 Black Condor

Q 19 Which two superheroes were portrayed on film by serial star Tom Tyler?

A 19 The Phantom and Captain Marvel

Q 20 Which two DC heroes have claimed Midway City as their home base?

A 20 Hawkman and The Doom Patrol

Q 21 Which character has Jack Kirby *never* penciled — Blue Beetle, Captain Marvel, The Atom or Kobra?

A 21 The Atom

Q 22 Jerry Siegel may be most famous for Superman, but which other 1940s star did he create?

A 22 The Spectre

Q 23 Jonathan Frakes, Riker on STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, also played a Marvel super-hero at public appearances. Which one?

A 23 Captain America

Q 24 What does Charlie Brown's father do for a living?

A 24 He is a barber.

Q 25 What is the last name of Linus and Lucy?

A 25 Van Pelt

Q 26 Who is 176-167?

A 26 The Beagle Boy who likes prunes— the only Beagle to whom creator Carl Barks gave a distinguishing characteristic.

Q 27 In HI AND LOIS, what is Lois's maiden name? (Hint: She has a famous brother.)

A 27 Bailey — her brother is Beetle Bailey.

Q 28 We have all heard the phrase "Starring that Oscar-winning rabbit, Bugs Bunny." Actually, there are two Oscar-winning rabbits. Name the other one.

A 28 Roger Rabbit

Q 29 Name five Earthmen who have at one time or another been Green Lantern.

A 29 Hal Jordan, Guy Gardner, John Stewart, Charlie Vickers, Alan Scott.

Q 30 What is the name of the Fantastic Four's mailman, and what is his "power"?

A 30 Willie Lumpkin, and he can wiggle his ears.

Q 31 What was the first series in STRANGE ADVENTURES?

A 31 *Not* Darwin Jones, although he did appear in #1. The first story in #1 introduced Chris KL-99.

Q 32 Who was DC's first funny animal superhero?

A 32 The Terrific Whatsit —who appeared in FUNNY STUFF in a duplicate of the costume of The Flash (Jay Garrick).

Q 33 What does The Human Torch (1939 version) have in common with The Holy Roman Empire?

A 33 Both are misnomers. The Holy Roman Empire wasn't Roman (or very holy), and The Human Torch wasn't human.

Q 34 In Sugar and Spike, what was Spike's real first name?

A 34 Cecil. This little tid-bit of information was given in #1 and never mentioned again.

Q 35 In Little Lulu's stories of Witch Hazel and Little Itch, what did the poor little girl search for in the forest?

A 35 Beebleberries

Q 36 What is the name of Prince Valiant's horse?

A 36 Arvak

Q37 What is the name of Tommy Tomorrow's space ship?

A 37 The Ace of Space

Q38 What does Billy Batson's SHAZAM stand for?

A 38 Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles, Mercury

Q39 In MAD magazine, Captain Marbles had a magic word: SHAZOOM. What did those letters stand for?

A 39 Strength, Health, Aptitude, Zeal, Ox (power of), Ox (power of another), Money.

Q40 In ELFQUEST, What are the names of Pick-nose's wife and mother-in-law?

A 40 Oddbit and Maggoty

Q41 What is Howard the Duck's favorite brand of cigars?

A 41 El Ropo

Q42 Warner Bros responded to Disney's Chip 'n' Dale with its own pair of rodents. Name those Looney-Tunes gophers.

A 42 Mack 'n' Tosh

Q43 What were the first words of Popeye the Sailor?

A 43 "'Ja think I'm a cowboy?" (He'd just been asked, "Hey there! Are you a sailor?")

Q44 What do the following cities have in common: Boston, Kalamazoo, Pensacola, Louisville, Walla-Walla?

A 44 They are all named in the Christmas carol sung each year in Walt Kelly's POGO

Q45 What was Captain Marvel Junior's silliest limitation?

A 45 He couldn't say his own name, because "Captain Marvel" was the magic word that turned him into Freddy Freeman.

Q46 We all know Gladstone Gander is the luckiest person in the world. Who is the *unluckiest*?

A 46 Joe Biftspik

Q47 Where did the classic newspaper comic strip GASOLINE ALLEY get its name?

A 47 It was the place Walt, Doc, and Avery got together each day to talk about cars.

Q48 What is the name of Gyro Gearloose's helper?

A 48 Helper

Q49 What's the name of the ape in the TV cartoon GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE?

A 49 Ape

Q50 What's the name of the dog in Neil Gaiman's 1990 novel, GOOD OMENS?

A 50 Dog

Q51 Marvel's Thanos/Eros conflict is loosely based on which psychiatrist's discussions of his pleasure/pain principle?

A 51 Sigmund Freud (confirmed by Jim Starlin)

Q52 Desmond Pitt, Benjamin Grimm's flight buddy, was transformed by Dr. Doom into what monstrosity?

A 52 Darkoth, the Death Demon

Q53 Who is the heroic father of Scott and Alex Summers (Cyclops and Havok)?

A 53 Corsair

Q54 Jessica Drew was genetically manipulated into becoming Spider-Woman by whom?

A 54 The High Evolutionary

Q55 What deceased X-Man predated Rogue for the ability to imitate mutant powers?

A 55 The Mimic

Q56 Kree-born Captain Mar-vell assumed what earthman's identity when first coming to Earth?

A 56 Dr. Walter Lawson

Q57 Captain Mar-vell died from cancer after exposure to what deadly substance?

A 57 Compound 13

Q58 What vegetative Golden Age character, shown briefly in Sun Fun Comics (Pelican Press), is considered the predecessor of the Flaming Carrot?

A 58 The Blazing Carrot (circa 1940)

Q59 Olympic swimmer Todd Arliss was transformed into Prince Namor's slippery nemises, named — ?

A 59 Tiger Shark

Q60 He played a DC character in a serial and a hero from another company in another serial. Who was he, and what heroes? (Hint: the second character later moved to DC.)

A 60 Kirk Alyn, who played Superman twice and Blackhawk once. (Blackhawk was then published by Quality.)

Q61 What three things do the 1940s Captain Marvel and The Phantom have in common?

A 61 A distinctive hands-on-hips pose; both drawn in the '70s by Don Newton; both played by Tom Tyler in serials.

Q62 He drew the French version of Captain Marvel, Jr. — but is far more famous for having drawn an indigenous French feature. Who is he, and what is that feature?

A 62 Albert Uderzo, of ASTERIX

Q63 In a late '50s story, Batman took on a different costume and name. This name was that of a JSA member, as well as three other DC characters, a Japanese movie hero, a SF movie, and a TV series. What is the name?

A 63 Starman

Q64 Two famous characters from different companies — one defunct for over a decade, and the other, defunct, revived, and finally returned in a different guise — teamed up in a 1964 Brazilian comic. Name them.

A 64 Fawcett's Captain Marvel and Timely's Human Torch (1940s version)

Q65 He played a DC hero in a '40s movie; in '50s TV he briefly possessed the power of another DC hero. Who was he? Which DC characters were these?

A 65 Robert Lowery played Batman in the serial. In a 1955 TV episode, he acquired Superman's invulnerability.

Q66 What two comics characters has Lyle Waggoner played?

A 66 Steve Trevor, in the WONDER WOMAN TV series, and Superman, in an episode of the CAROL BURNETT SHOW.

Q67 There are two actors named Rockwell who have played Kryptonians. Name them.

A 67 Robert Rockwell, Jor-el in the SUPERMAN series; and Johnny Rockwell, Superboy in a never-aired pilot.

Q68 In certain Italian and Brazilian comics, there is a Green Hornet-like character who fights crime using a special car, various gimmicks, and a black costume. What is Superpoto's secret identity?

A 68 Superduck is none other than Donald Duck.

Q69 In the movie SUPERMAN III, what high school class was having a reunion?

A 69 Smallville High's class of 1965.

Q70 In ARCHIE, what is Jughead's real name?

A 70 Forsyth P. Jones

Q71 Which hero, who was published by two different companies, had a twin brother who came from yet another company?

A 71 Captain Marvel, Jr. and/or Kid Eternity.

Q72 All three major members of this crime fighting family eventually proved to be twins. Name them.

A 72 The Marvel family. Cap and Mary were twins. In the early '80s we found Junior was also — his brother was Kid Eternity.

Q73 Lou Wahl was an artist who worked for the American Comics Group. Who was he, really?

A 73 Kurt Schaffenberger, who used his maternal grandfather's name for his ACG work.

Q74 What do Brick Bradford, the Shadow, and Spy-Smasher have in common?

A 74 Actor Kane Richmond played them all.

Q75 Besides the Lone Ranger, what other masked hero did actor Clayton Moore portray?

A 75 The Ghost of Zorro, in the 1949 serial of the same name released by Republic Pictures.

Q76 A Chilean communist treatise made use — in its title and treatment — of what US comic-book character?

A 76 Donald Duck, in Ariel Dorfman's and Armand Mattelart's HOW TO READ DONALD DUCK.

Q77 What is the name of the owner of DC Comics who negotiated the rights to SUPERMAN away from Siegel and Shuster?

A 77 Harry Donenfeld

Q78 When Dr. Strange became Dr. Stranger Yet, what did he look like?

A 78 A warthog

Q79 What is Wonder Warthog's secret identity and what newspaper does he work for?

A 79 Philbert Desanex and The Muthalode Morning Mungpie (later the Muthalode Morning Mishap)

Q80 What kind of motorcycle does Wonder Warthog ride and what kind of motorcycle does he race against?

A 80 A Slowped (an American motorcycle) and a Fast-ass Sumbitchi (Japanese)

Q81 Name Junior Tracy's first wife.

A 81 The Moon Maid

Q82 What is the actual first name of "Buck" Rogers?

A 82 Anthony

Q83 Peter Parker was raised by his Aunt May and Uncle Ben — what were the given names of Peter's parents?

A 83 Richard and Mary

Q84 What did the acronym S.H.I.E.L.D. stand for in the '60s and '70s, and what does it stand for today?

A 84 Supreme Headquarters International Espionage Law-enforcement Division; Strategic Hazard Intervention, Espionage and Logistics Directorate.

Q85 Issue #100 of TALES TO ASTONISH featured an epic battle between what two Marvel characters?

A 85 Sub-Mariner and The Incredible Hulk

Q86 Name the one word expression, made popular by Stan Lee, that means, literally, "fine wood shavings used in packaging."

A 86 Excelsior

Q87 What are the three issue numbers of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN not approved by the Comics Code Authority, because of their treatment of drug abuse?

A 87 AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #s 96-98

Q88 Danny Ketch is the new Ghost Rider. Name the first person to assume the role of GHOST RIDER in a Marvel comic

A 88 Carter Slade, who appeared in GHOST RIDER, WESTERN GUNFIGHTERS, and others starting in 1967.

Q89 Who produced the original Cap'n Crunch commercials and gave us such greats as George of the Jungle, Dudley Do-Right, and Rocky and Bullwinkle?

A 89 Jay Ward

Q90 What are the last names of the cartoon cat and mouse characters, Tom and Jerry?

A 90 Cat and Mouse

Q91 Comic books evolved directly from comic strips. From what medium did comic strips directly evolve?

A 91 Political cartoons

Q92 The first pamphlet-format comic book (FUNNIES ON PARADE in 1933) had what cover price?

A 92 None. It was a premium for redeeming coupons from Proctor and Gamble products.

Q93 When the Comics Code was created in 1955, EC Comics was one of the three publishers that did not sport the approval stamp on its comics. Name the other two.

A 93 Dell (then publisher of the Disney Comics) and Gilberton (Classics Illustrated).

Q94 Name the three hosts from the EC horror comics.

A 94 The Crypt-keeper, The Old Witch, and The Vault-keeper

Q95 Richard Outcault created two colorful characters while pioneering the comic-strip medium. Name them.

A 95 The Yellow Kid and Buster Brown

Q96 Who invented the term "penelology" to describe the comic book and comic strip hobbies?

A 96 Jerry Bails

Q97 Literally millions of people have seen ARNOLD NOOPER comics on a rack over the last thirty years. Why can't you buy a copy?

A 97 It was only sold at Gillis' Grocery c. 1961-63. It was visible during the final two seasons of DOBIE GILLIS.

Q98 Which of the following have appeared in comics: Muhammed Ali, Ty Cobb, Alice Cooper, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Albert Einstein, Benjamin Franklin, George Gipp, Abraham Lincoln, The Not Ready For Prime Time Players, Edgar Allen Poe, Jackie Robinson, John Wayne?

A 98 All of them

Q99 Which of the following have been comic titles: NEW UNIVERSE, SUPERMAN 3000, JOURNEY INTO SUSPENSE, REAL MYSTERY COMICS, WONDER WOMAN'S BOY-FRIEND STEVE TREVOR, SLAUGHTERMAN, COMBAT WOMBAT, GROOVY GHOULIES?

A 99 SLAUGHTERMAN

Q100 What are the four ink colors in the 4-color process used to print comic books?

A 100 Cyan, magenta, yellow and black

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"It got to the point where I couldn't afford everything."

STEVEN P. THOMPSON

And the winner is . . . Steven P. Thompson! No, he's not the Steve Thompson who is related to those people at CBG. Nor is he the Steve Thompson who runs the POGO fan club. He is the Steve Thompson of Cincinnatti, Ohio, who scored an impressive 78.5 in the COMICS INTERVIEW 100 QUIZ. First Prize! Who is this fellow, and how was he able to win the quiz, and what is he going to do with his $100? Let's find out . . .

DARREL L. BOATZ: *I guess the big question that's on DAK's mind is: Do you buy every issue of COMICS INTERVIEW and read it from cover to cover?* (Laughter.)

STEVEN P. THOMPSON: *Most* of them, actually. I've got #1 through #70-something, and after that it's like every second or third issue. It used to be I would buy them whether I was interested in the person or not — because I always found the interviews interesting — but it eventually got to the point where I just couldn't *afford* to keep up with everything.

DARREL: *How did you acquire all the great comics knowledge that led you to become our winner?*

STEVE: It's a strange talent, but if **Ed Sullivan** ever makes a comeback — I'm set! *(Laughter.)* Ever since I was a kid I would read a comic book and I would remember things. My parents always used to think it was ridiculous, said, "You don't need to know who drew this or who

COMICS INTERVIEW 100 QUIZ ★ WINNER ★

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"The secret isn't knowing answers, but where to find them."

inked that, what difference does it make — is it a good story or not!" And my wife, when I first met her, thought, "Where is all this weird stuff coming from, what has this got to *do* with anything!" But I just *remembered* a lot of it. Of course, my theory has always been the secret of life is not really knowing all the answers, it's knowing where to find them.

DARREL: *You have a lot of reference material there, do you?*

STEVE: Quite a bit, but I didn't really need a lot of it for the quiz, though, which surprised me. There were a few things I had to double-check, but for the most part I either knew them, or I didn't and just guessed.

DARREL: *A lot of them I didn't know myself — and still don't because DAK won't show me the answers!* (Laughter.)

STEVE: Rene wanted me to run out and rent the PRINCE VALIANT movie with **Robert Wagner** because around the house all the time I was saying "Gosh darn it, *what* was the name of that horse?" I couldn't remember it — nothing! — so she says, "Go rent the movie!" I said, "No, I don't want to force myself to sit through that. I'll just miss that question." *(Laughter.)* I'd seen the movie before and it was not very good, and even if the name was in there it was probably different than in the comic strips anyway.

DARREL: *I talked with Rene a little bit last week and she said that you spent about a month trying to come up with answers —*

STEVE: Yeah, I took COMICS INTERVIEW #100 to work and I ran off some copies of the trivia quiz pages that I carried around with me. On lunch breaks and stuff I would go through those, and it took me about a month to get all of the ones that I eventually got. I think I got the largest part of them within the first couple of days, because I just sat down and tried to go through the whole list, but eventually it got to the point where I was just racking my brain trying to figure out this answer or that answer. ARNOLD NOOPER comics, you know . . . it sounded *sort* of familiar but it *didn't* sound familiar; that's the kind of thing either you know it or you don't, so it just drove me crazy. I never did get that one. *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *Well, all of the answers are printed in this issue of COMICS INTERVIEW.*

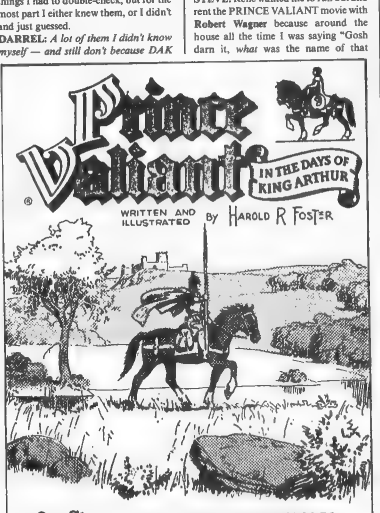
STEVE: Rene will be happy. She says I was running around yelling "Eureka!" but I don't remember actually yelling that.

DARREL: *I guess you were a young kid when you first started reading comics. Do you remember which ones first grabbed your attention?*

STEVE: Oh, yes. Again, it's like the rest of this knowledge, it just sticks in there for some reason. BATMAN in 1966, it was the May 1966 issue; "Death Knocks Three Times" was the title of the story, had a cover by **Gil Kane** and **Murphy Anderson.** And to this day that is my

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Steven P. Thompson
Born: 9 January 1959 — Covington, KY
Occupation: Retail Assistant Manager for Waldenbooks
Years At: Going on ten
Education: Just high school
Family: Wife, one, Rene
Favorite Comic Books: The Lee/Kirby FANTASTIC FOUR; WATCHMEN; the early MAD comics; SUGAR & SPIKE
Other Interests: Movies and Old-Time Radio; was an editor of the (now defunct) NOT READY FOR DRIVE-TIME NEWSLETTER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IN THE DAYS OF KING ARTHUR
WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD R FOSTER
Our Story: SO PRINCE VALIANT SADDLES ARVAK AND SETS FORTH TO FIND OUT IF THE HOLY GRAIL BE FACT OR MYTH. HIS HEART IS NOT IN HIS MISSION, FOR BEHIND HIM HE LEAVES THE WRECKAGE OF HIS ONCE-HAPPY MARRIAGE.

Art by Hal Foster

"Gosh darn it, what *was* the name of that horse?"

Kane & Anderson.

all-time favorite comic-book cover, just because I consider that the first comic book I actually collected. I had read some before that, because I remember reading some of the real early X-MEN stuff before I even knew how to read, I remember making up my own stories to go with them. But that was the first one I collected. I actually remember going with my dad and buying that at a local drug store. The Harvey SPIRITs in 1966 were some of my early favorites, too.

"I proposed a comics fan club to Waldenbooks."

DARREL: *Do you still have those?*

STEVE: Like most comic-book collectors my mother threw out my comics on a semi-regular basis. If only she knew how much money she would have saved me if she would have let me keep them instead of having to go back and rebuy my childhood.

DARREL: *Are you involved in comics fandom in any way?*

STEVE: Only peripherally. I always *wanted* to be, but either I never got around to it or I never got as involved as I would like on any individual thing that I tried to get involved in. About two years ago I did an article that was published in AMAZING HEROES; that was my first effort to actually get published in any kind of fan magazine. And it went real well! But, with the ever-changing editors at AMAZING HEROES, I wasn't able to establish any kind of rapport with the editor who published my article and the next editor had never heard of me when I sent in another proposal, so I just never got back around to doing anything on that. That's about the closest I've come to being really involved in anything.

DARREL: *What was the article about?*

STEVE: It was about Pussycat, who was a very obscure sort-of-but-not-quite Marvel character in the '60s along the lines of PLAYBOY's Little Annie Fanny; it was published in some of the men's magazines that were put out by the same company that did Marvel, and it had art by **Wally Wood, Jim Mooney,** and a lot of the people that were doing Marvel stuff at the time. Marvel reprinted it in 1968 in a magazine format about the same time they came out with the SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN magazine, and I picked up a copy of it at the San Diego Convention a couple of years ago; and I basically just wanted to try and get my investment back — the magazine wasn't cheap.

The worst part was Waldenbooks, where I work, carried AMAZING HEROES at that time, and they *dropped* it with that issue; we never even got that issue in. I wasn't even able to say, "Hey, I have an article in here."

They just recently started carrying COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE and I would be *shocked* if we've sold a single one, because it seems like we're returning every one that we get. We sold out of something like 80 copies of the recent X-MEN #1, and all of those people are, I think, the kind of people who would *love* to read the stuff that's in COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE or COMICS INTERVIEW, but they just pass it right by, even if you *recommend* it to them.

DARREL: *Strange that all of them would be like that.*

STEVE: A couple of years ago, when they first made a real commitment to carrying comics, I presented a proposal to Waldenbooks for a comic-book fan club. Our manager loved it, our district manager loved it, our regional manager loved it — our home office never even commented on it; they never even returned my follow-up calls. At the time we had a science-fiction club and a romance club and a mystery club, and I figured if they were going to make that big a commitment to comics, which is something I *know* about, let's see if we can do something for that.

DARREL: *Yeah, I remember the science-fiction club. I'd get a handout about it every time I bought a book.*

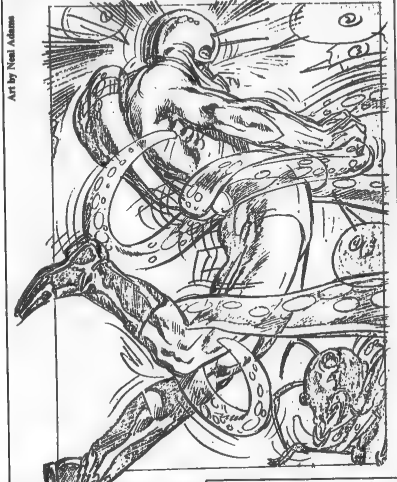
STEVE: That's the one.

DARREL: *How would this club have worked?*

STEVE: It was pretty much set up along the lines of the science-fiction club. There would be a membership card and — if you showed your card when you were buying comics, and if you bought a certain amount within a month's time or at one time — you would get a discount. But in retail magazines, as a rule, you don't get as big a discount — I'm sure you know this — as you do on any other kind of merchandise, so we would not have been able to offer much of a discount, which I figure ultimately is probably what shot it down.

DARREL: *Getting into the quiz itself, you said you answered a lot of the questions within a few days, got the answers real fast?*

STEVE: Yeah. When I was at the comics shop — I had been *waiting* for COMICS INTERVIEW #100 — I started flipping through it, and some other people were there flipping through it at the time, and they were saying that they would have liked to have entered it but they didn't know *any* of those questions. Well, I flipped through it and a lot of them just right off the bat looked easy to me. I said,



Art by Neal Adams

"I flipped through and said, 'Oh, this *can't* be *this* easy!'"

"Oh, this can't be *this* easy" — and ultimately it wasn't *that* easy — but a lot of the questions were fairly simple, I thought.

DARREL: *Some certainly were, like #9: What did the letters DC in DC Comics originally stand for?*

STEVE: Yeah. The one that really gave me fits was the one with the numbers, #26: Who is 176-167? Literally, I just happened to be reading an UNCLE SCROOGE, one of the **Don Rosa** issues, and I just opened it up and there were the Beagle Boys and this number was right there, and I said, "That's it!" *(Laughter.)* I didn't say "Eureka!" I would not have gotten it if it hadn't been by accident.

Looking at the first page, the first one I knew, the second one I knew, the third one I knew more or less — I had one word wrong but it was easy enough to check — the fourth one I knew, the fifth one I knew, the sixth one I had to guess on — I don't know if I got it right or not. Do you know the answer to that one?

DARREL: *No. I thought it might be the Silver Surfer.*

STEVE: I guessed Doctor Strange because I remember **Tom Wolfe** appeared in a DOCTOR STRANGE story back in 1969. I thought that might have been by way of thanking him for mentioning Doctor Strange in his book.

DARREL: *That might be. I read THE ELECTRIC KOOLAID ACID TEST years ago and I just don't remember.*

STEVE: I *tried* once and I just couldn't get through it.

DARREL: *Yeah, I know what you mmm.*

STEVE: But the seventh one I knew, the eighth one I had a fairly good guess on — I still don't know if that one was right; I guessed **Ray Bradbury.**

DARREL: *Hmm... I was thinking maybe Harlan Ellison.*

STEVE: That's a good guess, too.

DARREL: *We'll see when this issue comes out! Actually, on the fourth question, I thought about that one for quite awhile and it seemed to me like there could be* several *answers to it. It depends on what you consider an alternate or an underground or a groundlevel or whatever.*

STEVE: Right. The first thing that I remember being referred to as an alternative was the Star*Reach groundlevel stuff, so that's what I put. I *hope* that was right because I was pretty sure that was right. But there were a number of other things that you could have considered alternate, yeah.

DARREL: *Well, I didn't know what*

"Selective memory . . . to remember obscure things."

came out before what, but I was thinking of FIRST KINGDOM.

STEVE: Yeah, **Jack Katz.** That was definitely the same period. I'm not sure which one was first. Anyway, #10, #11 and #12 were obvious to me, I'm like 99% sure that I got them right, so that's all the first page, what I looked at originaly. And all these people were saying, "Gee, these are hard!" And I'm saying, "Boy, these are easy!" *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *How do you retain all this knowledge?*

STEVE: Selective memory, I guess. I was always a straight A student in school, though, and history was always my favorite subject because it's basically remembering the stuff that they tell you, you don't have to actually learn formulas or anything like in math. But it's certainly not a photographic memory because there's *thousands* of things that I forget on a regular basis, just enough to remember a lot of obscure things.

They had a movie trivia show on one of the cable stations here in town a few years ago and I got on that and won a couple of episodes; technically I'm the all-time undefeated champion, but that's only because they cancelled the show after my last win. *(Laughter.)* So it's not just comics knowledge; all this arcane stuff that nobody really cares about is just all stuck up there.

DARREL: *What about comics today — I mean, obviously you're still reading comics on a regular basis?*

STEVE: Yeah.

DARREL: *Which ones are your favorites today?*

STEVE: Well, the good thing is working at Waldenbooks I *sell* comics, so I can take a few at lunch and read those in the back room; I don't have to buy them. I think the good stuff today is better than it's ever been, but there's a lot less of it. SANDMAN is consistently wonderful! I literally will not even flip through that, I want to be surprised every month and will just start from the beginning and go straight through. The SUPERMAN titles right now are excellently done for straight, solid superhero comics. BATMAN, the specials that they've been coming out with, like with Judge Dredd and Predator, those are excellently done — the regular BATMAN books I don't care for right now. SOLAR from Valiant is really good right now. NEXUS was a favorite when it was coming out, and will be again, I assume, when it comes out again.

A lot of the independents . . . I don't know if it's the licensed product or what, but I've kind of grown away from them. For awhile I was getting really heavily into the independent comics, and I still get LOST IN SPACE from Innovation, which I think is fairly well done, and a couple of other titles from Dark Horse . . . I haven't really bought anything regularly for the last couple of years, but I liked the CONCRETE mini-series they just did.

"I taught myself to draw tracing Wally Wood pictures."

DARREL: *Who are your favorite creators?*

STEVE: For all-time **Wally Wood,** my idol; I taught myself to draw by tracing **Wally Wood** pictures. Ruined a lot of comics that way. *(Laughter.)* His T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS were coming out right about the time I was first starting comics, and his DAREDEVIL had just recently come out and I was still able to pick up a lot of that at the five-cent stores — go in and pay five cents apiece and you got all those wonderful early Marvels that cost you hundreds of dollars now. **Wally Wood** all through his

$100 WINNER

"My wife, Rene, likes ELFQUEST and OMAHA."

career, I think, was probably my favorite artist, even though he's widely known to have had ghosts and assistants all over and it's hard to tell on some of his later stuff what he actually had to do with it.

Walt Kelly I like quite a bit, his POGO stuff and his other stuff as well. The last couple of years I've found myself buying stuff I never would have thought I would buy because, as a kid, I was always into the science fiction and the superheroes. The last couple of years I've been buying CHRISTMAS WITH MOTHER GOOSE whenever I can find it, the **Walt Kelly** comics. **Kirby** and **Ditkó** and **Neal Adams** and **Will Eisner** are all favorites. **Don Ross** lately. I really like his stuff.

DARREL: *What did everyone down at the comics shop think when you told them you were the winner?*

STEVE: Nobody was there! *(Laughter.)* Every week I go over there on my lunch break — the day the new comics come in — and there's all these people hanging around, so I went over this week and not a single person I knew was there. Actually, that's not true, my cousin was there, but I had called him and told him the night before. But the owner was excited, **Paul Mullins**, and said he'd order more copies of this issue.

DARREL: *What's the name of the store?*

STEVE: Comic Book World in Florence, Kentucky.

DARREL: *Yeah, have him order an extra case and you can sit there and do an autograph session.*

STEVE: That's an idea. *(Laughter.)* I'll try to tell them again this week when I go over.

DARREL: *And you can tell them the*

Art by Wendy Pini

POGO
MY SAKES! LO, GRIMLIN CHILE TYPE CRITTURS ALL DRESS UP LIKE BEARS!
WHO'D IT IS
YEP! UNCLE ALBERT'S MAKIN' US PLAY GOLDIE LOX AN' SCUFF WITH HIM
SHIT! OL' ALBERT IS OVER AT OUR PLACE NOW — CAPERIN ON LIKE A FEARLY HOW SCHOOL STUDENT
HE AIN'T ME OUT TO END UP MY PUREBRAIN — MY GRACIOUS THEY BEEN GONE SINCE 19 OUGHT 16
HUH! ALBERT IMPARTS ON GRIMLIN LIKE I AN' THE FOUR BEARS!
WHEN UNCLE ALBERT PLAY ANYTHING HE PLAY IT TO THE FULLEST — SNARING GOLDIE AN' THE FOUR BEARS.
WELL, THAT BIG SNOOPY ALBERT BEAR WE MET TOLD US ALBERT WAS OVER AT THE BEARS' HOUSE
LET'S UH, RUSH OVER AN' SEE HOW ALBERT COMIN' WITH HIS GOLDIE LOX ACT
I BET HE GOOD AT BREAKIN' UP CAMPS
NOW NATURALLY, YOU LIL' REPRISING OF WHAT IS ORGANIZED SO GOOD AS BEARS YOU PROBLY THINKS YOU IS BEARS
UH IS BEARS, I IS A MAN BEAR.
I IS THE CUTE BABY TAO
4-29
THAT'S JUST WHAT I MEANT! YOU'RE SMOOCHY!
A PITY YOU WASN'T CARRIED AWAY BY GYPSIES.
OR CARING HERE
I TELLIN' YOU FOR THE LAST TIME — ACE BEARS LIKE REAL BEARS OR I'LL WHAP YO'
OH — PURPLE STUCKS!
THAT'S THE LAST IMPERTINENT SYRUPY REMARK YOU'LL
YOU WANG MY MUNK!
WHY, IT'S ALBERT!
MY SAKES! SINCE THIS ONE OF YOU CHILLUN I IS SHRUNK'D
JUST NAT'RAL TO THE INSIDE SAYS HOME SWEET HOME
HOW'D YOU FIGGER THAT?
HEY!
ARE WE SUPPOSED TO EAT?

©1992 King Features, Inc.

"Cancel all monthly series and do ev[illegible]ing as a mini."

answer to the ARNOLD NOOPER question.

STEVE: Yeah. It would be interesting to know if anybody got that one right.

DARREL: *Nobody did. I asked David Kraft about it and nobody got that one.*

STEVE: I'm not surprised. My wife told me you said it was on DOBIE GILLIS?

DARREL: *Yeah.*

STEVE: I love that show, but she hates it and has not let me watch it for the past year.

DARREL: *What a bummer.* (Laughter.) *Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?*

STEVE: This is an idea that came to me earlier today, and I don't know how feasible this would be because I haven't had the chance to really think it out, but part of what I see as a problem with comics these days is that there's too much product on the market and a lot of that is *inferior* product by virtue of the fact that they are just churning it out. It might not be a bad idea right across the board to cancel *all* monthly and bimonthly series and do *everything* as a mini-series, where people can take the time to do it right, take the time to do something quality with the characters. The fans will be happy if they're *good*, instead of the stuff that's being regularly published, which almost seems like filler until something else good comes along. FANTASTIC FOUR is a good example of that. You have the **Lee/Kirby** stuff, which is really really good, and then you have the **John Romita** and **John Buscema** stuff which is OK but not much, and then you move on into the **Marv Wolfman** and **George Perez** stuff which is really good, and then you move on to the **Steve Englehart** and **Bill Sienkiewicz** stuff which is filler.

It's like it skips — good stuff and then poor stuff and then good stuff and then poor stuff. Right now we're in the period where we're waiting for more good stuff, and it seems to me that if we would just skip the poor stuff, work on the good stuff and publish it when it's *ready*, that would be a better thing all around. But

"I've got all the LEGION stuff in reprints already."

again, this idea just came to me today and it occurs to me that that would put a lot of people out of work, too.

DARREL: *On the other hand, it might free them up to work on other things that they want to work on.*

STEVE: That's true. And if it's just a matter of keeping the characters before the public, just reprint some of the older stuff in good quality but *affordable* editions.

DARREL: *Well, there are a lot of reprint editions out now. Some of them are quite expensive.*

STEVE: Yeah. I started out trying to keep up with those but then financial reality hit.

DARREL: *I have been pretty selective myself. I love that these things are coming out, but I can't afford $100 for a CAPTAIN MARVEL reprint.*

STEVE: I got a deal on that one. I ended up getting that one for $25.

DARREL: *You're making me jealous!* (Laughter.) *I would have loved to have bought it, it's just I couldn't see spending that much money on it. But I've seen the book and it is beautiful and worth the money.*

STEVE: And now DC is coming out with the ALL-STAR ARCHIVES and I always wanted them to reprint *more* of the Justice Society stuff, and here it is at

Art by Steve Ditko

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
MARVEL 12¢
SPIDER-MAN'S VERY LIFE MIGHT DEPEND ON LEARNING THE IDENTITY OF "The BIG MAN!"
NEVER HAS ANYONE FOUGHT SUCH MERCILESS FOES AS... "THE ENFORCERS!"
IN THIS ISSUE! LEARN WHY J. JONAH JAMESON REALLY HATES SPIDER-MAN!

"The problem . . . too much product on the market."

"The $100 is going towards the first car payment."

A rare illustration that Kirby BOTH penciled and inked.

©1992 Jack Kirby

$39.95 and I can't really afford it.

DARREL: *I just phoaked down the $39.95 for the LEGION ARCHIVES and I have all this stuff in reprints already. I don't know why I bought it!*

STEVE: Yeah, that's why I turned that one down, because I've got all of the LEGION stuff in reprints already.

DARREL: *But it's a beautiful book. Something you said earlier . . . oh, as far as the quantity of product on the market, some of that is relative. A friend and I were having a discussion recently about the X-rated books and she was saying that it was so terrible that there were so many of them, but it's relative; more copies of one issue of X-MEN sell during a month than all of those X-rated things combined!*

STEVE: Yeah.

DARREL: *You have to take things like that into consideration as well, because obviously they're not going to cancel X-MEN and just make it two mini-series a year, as long as they can keep selling it as a monthly title, or biweekly even.*

STEVE: Yeah, from a *business* viewpoint I can see where it's a really stupid idea, but literally this just occurred to me this afternoon and it just seems that from a *creative* standpoint it would solve an awful lot of complaints that people, including myself, have been having for the past few years.

DARREL: *Well, we're about out of time —*

STEVE: Rene wanted me to mention that her favorite comics are ELFQUEST and OMAHA. She was kind of surprised, she didn't think she would like OMAHA after I described it to her, but now every week she asks if there's a new ELFQUEST or OMAHA. Of course, both of them are notoriously slow. *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *Well, ELFQUEST started out as three issues a year and I figure as long as they can keep to that they're not falling behind.*

STEVE: Right.

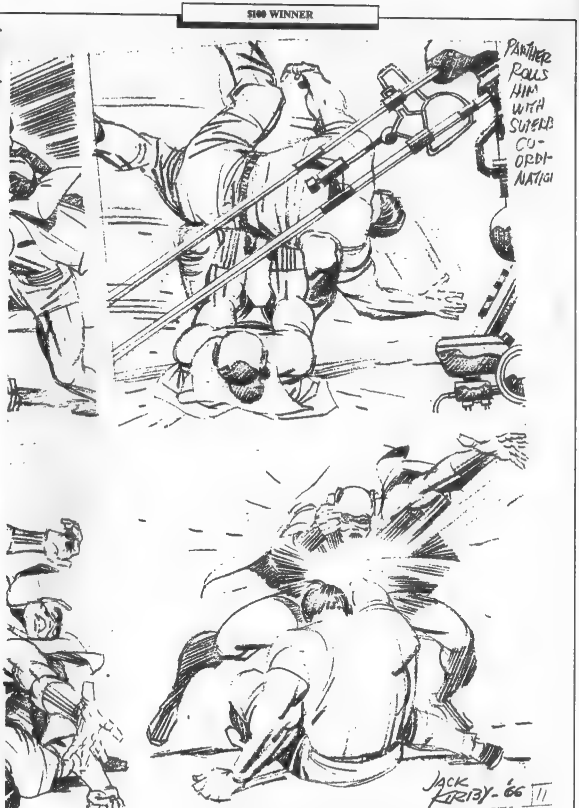
DARREL: *How are you going to spend the $100 you won, Steve?*

STEVE: Well, last week I wrecked my car, and I got the car fixed but I was still a little bit leery about driving it, so we traded it off and bought a new car yesterday — the $100 is going towards the first payment.

DARREL: *Well, DAK will be happy to hear that he is contributing to safety on the road.*

STEVE: Yes, very much so. *(Laughter.)*

Art by Jack Kirby



Unpublished panels from Marvel's Fantastic Four#52, with The Black Panther (his 1st appearance).

LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

COMICS INTERVIEW: QUALITY

DAK and Pals,

Congrats on the 100th issue of COMICS INTERVIEW! Who would have thought that when the first issue hit the stands lo, those many years ago, that you would hit the century mark and still be going strong.

The fact that you have reached issue #100 can be directly credited to the fact that all of you fine folks on the mountain have stuck to a one-ingredient formula: *quality*. That quality is evident issue after issue, regardless of the subject matter between the covers, be it turtles, movies, or the "little guys" in and around the industry.

I'm proud that I have been a small part of the success of COMICS INTERVIEW, and Dr. Martin (a friend of mine who has been in semi-retirement, but hopes to get work again soon) and I would like to extend our best wishes for continued success to all.

Brian Talley
201 Lotz Dr.
Grafton, VA 23692

POWER 100 POW-WOW

Dear David,

I finally found a copy of issue #100 of COMICS INTERVIEW! The POWER 100 list was very interesting. There were some that surprised me and some that didn't. I enjoyed the format that was represented. My suggestion for the next one is to update the photos. I bet some of the folks were embarassed by some of the old photos. (I realize that it's probably all you had to work with. Such is life.)

The thing that I enjoyed most about issue #100 was the interview with **Don Heck.** The interview came off just as Don is, a true gentleman, and a man that isn't afraid to tell you what's on his mind. I hope that someday fandom, editors, and the powers that be appreciate Don for the truly talented craftsman that he is. I do have a suggestion for a future interview: Have **Tim Truman** interview his mentor, **Sam Glanzman.** Believe me, there's another interesting interview.

Thanks for your time. Good luck with the book and next year's POWER 100.

Beau Smith
Sales Director — Eclipse Comics

HECK — NO!

Dear Dave:

A short correction on interviewer **Lou Mougin's** assertion that interviewee **Don Heck** is the penciller of Dell's ON STAGE comic. The only issue was almost entirely **Leonard Starr** swipes, and was definitely inked by the late **Frank Giacola.** It could have been pencilled by **Giacola,** but since the non-established and subsidiary characters appear to have been pencilled by **Frank Springer,** I'd attribute the whole book to him.

At any rate, **Don Heck** had nothing to do with that issue.

Richard Howell
Leonia, NJ 07605

UNVARNISHED APPRECIATION

David!

I read **Lou Mougin's** interiew of **Murphy Anderson** with great enjoyment. He certainly touched all the bases and I learned so much more about Murph — a dear, valued friend. I just don't see enough of him and his great wife, Helen. Thank you for giving him all that well-deserved space in COMICS INTERVIEW #101.

Shel Dorf
San Diego, CA

WHO'S NUMBER ONE?

Dear DAK;

Read with interest the talk with **Perez** on WAR OF THE GODS. Dissatisfied with the people he works for, is he? Lied to by a big corporation, was he? Hmm . . . Where have we heard *that* situation before? One of the perks to being a big-name funnybook artist is that you can piss and moan about things like that, and perfect strangers actually pay attention to you!

Not that I'm complaining! I smirked and guffawed as much as the next guy at seeing his dirty laundry wave around in public.

What prompted me to write was his assertion that Wonder Woman is the longest-running female character in comics. Of *course*, he's referring only to title characters, although he didn't think to say so; otherwise, Lois Lane would beat the star-spangled drawers off Queen Hippolyta's little girl. And of *course*, he's referring only to characters in *American* comics, although he didn't think to say so; I'm not qualified to state unequivocally that any given female comics character is the longest running in the world, and I doubt he is either.

But even with these obvious-but-unstated restrictions, the longest-running female title character in American comics is not Wonder Woman. Offhand, I'd say it's probably Blondie, with Nancy coming in second.

One of my pet peeves is the tunnel vision with which the majority of super-hero writers and artists seem afflicted. I know it's part of the fanboy litany that comics before ACTION COMICS #1 existed in some kind of paleolithic dark ages, scarcely impacting on the bright and perfect modern world of superheroes that we enjoy today — but shouldn't a top professional like **Perez** know better?

There it is again! Tunnel vision! **Chuck Rozanski,** hardly an illiterate when it comes to comics (one would think), says your "Power 100" list should limit itself to people who are directly involved in the comics business, as opposed to those who make movies or create newspaper strips. My goodness, Chuck, what business do you think **Charles M. Schulz** and **Bill Watterson** are in?

Don Markstein
P.O. Box 17298
Phoenix, AZ 85011

ITALY: ANOTHER OPINION

Dear DAK,

I'm the editor/publisher of an Italian magazine about comics called MARVEL SERIES NOTIZIARIO. Don't let the name confuse you! At first, we were a monographic magazine about Marvel, then we evolved into a publication about *all* genres of comics (not strictly even in the "comic book" form, which is peculiarly American).

I've considered writing you many times (especially after the **Marco Lupoi** interview in CI #60 and **Fulvia Serra's** in CI #88) to make some explanations

about the Italian comics scene (not being partial to the **Lupoi** and **Serra** versions) but I've never sat down to do it until now, after reading your "comments invitation" in CI #95, and also in CI #99.

I'd like to explain a little my opinion about the two "Italian interviews" you've done.

I know **Marco Lupoi** quite well, enough to tell you that he talks often without thinking too much. To make only a few examples, the actual print run of TEX and TOPOLINO (MICKEY MOUSE) is about 500,000-600,000 copies. In the '70s TOPOLINO had reached pinnacles of 1,000,000 copies and over, only for Italy (**Todd McFarlane**, who are you?). DOLCE VITA (as well as all the other products of the "Valvoline" avant-garde group) has been a failure and this isn't a surprise. The stories of Mickey Mouse and Tex aren't *definitely* always the same; there have been talents among the Italian Disney authors — comparable to the best of **Barks** or **Gottfredson** (like **Romano Scarpa** — check out the few stories published in USA!). The so-called "western stuff" is popular but not *so* popular; there are few "classic" western titles (KEN PARKER, for example, isn't a traditional western, it's a metaphor of our present society, a real clever comic). Porn comics have nothing in common with the real comics industry, and are bought mainly by "normal" pornography consumers.

The situation is — perhaps — a little better than the one you have in the U.S. because people judge every kind of comic for what it is, and don't think of comics as harmful or evil for the youth. They might think of 'em as a loss of time, but a thing like SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT could never happen here in Italy.

The main problem with American society is — in my opinion — that there is too much hypocrisy and too little dialogue between parents and sons. There are a lot of narrow-minded people, side by side with stupid ones, having faith in commercial operations like that Dianetics thing or those kinds of TV preachers (as in X-MEN: GOD LOVES, MAN KILLS).

But there's no sense in making a superficial analysis (that's why I don't like your interviews with **Lupoi** and **Fulvia Serra**).

And . . . thank you for those wonderful Marvel DEFENDERS stories (I read 'em as a boy and they amazed me a lot!)

Claudio Piccini
V.le Amendola 471
41100 Modena
ITALY

ALIENS & THE THING!

Claudio, you're very welcome! It never ceases to amaze (and gratify) me, the impact those issues had on a surprising variety of folks around the world — especially when, at the time, I was feeling isolated, alienated and alone. Instead of encouragement, editors at Marvel were attacking me for not doing DEFENDERS in a more standard superhero style. Only much later did I learn that the stories which brought me such flak had been nominated for the British Eagle Awards and had favorably influenced comics fans who continue to comment on them at conventions and in correspondence nearly 15 years later. So — thanks for remembering, Claudio, and please keep me posted on the Italian comics scene.

— DAK

MARVEL-RELATED DEATHS REMEMBERED

Davebeast:

I was partly prompted to write by my belated awareness of the death of **Carol Kalish.** Not that I knew her well (I found her irritating), but has anyone noticed this is another Marvel-related death? A heart attack on the way to work. Stress? Kindly recall **Gene Day** died of exhaustion. **John Verpoorten** and **Danny Crespi** dropped in the traces. Ancient **Morrie Kuramoto** expired on the subway while commuting to the office. And I myself collapsed on a train in November of '83 with one fuck of a case of overwork. At the time, I was roughly the same age as **Ms. Kalish**, and thus this struck a chord.

If what the local retailers say is true, Spider-Man is spreading his web on a *weekly* basis. How can they keep up that murderous pace? And the intention is to drive "independents" out of business? Bad form! They have certainly sacrificed quality for quantity, judging by the smeary contents of the squalid titles they're printing. Jesus, whole forests vanishing into the greedy corporate maw and not even artistic justification. Is there any sort of backlash or are the fanboys just sucking up more mediocre X-Shit? Sombre thoughts indeed, but my break is over and it's back to the wordmines.

Ron Fontes

INTERVIEW welcomes your thoughts and comments in the Last Word. Send your correspondence to: DAK, COMICS INTERVIEW, 234 Fifth Ave., Suite 301, New York, NY 10001, or fax your letter to (404) 782-6625. Please include your name and address.

INTERVIEW reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity.

EROS COMICS

SPRING 1992 CATALOG

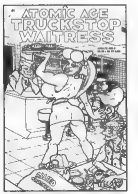
PO Box 25070
Seattle WA
98125-1970

THESE COMICS ARE DEFINITELY *NOT* FOR LITTLE BOYS!

• THE ANTON DREK COLLECTION • WENDY WHITEBREAD, UNDERCOVER SLUT was only the beginning for this imaginative purveyor of sleazy thrills! ANTON'S DREKBOOK is a selection of shorts (including very funny comic-book parodies such as "SwanPut"), while the two-issue FORBIDDEN FRANKENSTEIN adds a new wrinkle to an old subject!

• ART BY WETHERELL • All art by EROS favorite Art Wetherell. TWO HOT GIRLS, written by Terry Hooper, is a time-spanning tale of lesbian lust. RUBY SWAFT'S TALES OF THE UNEXPURGATED is an anthology of sexy horror stories, and 100 DEGREES IN THE SHADE, written by Howard Lake, is an erotic pot-boiler in the tradition of *Body Heat*.

ALIEN SEX/MONSTER LUST: An eye-opening portfolio of wigged-out drawings by Bruce Patterson, featuring creatures and babes doing what comes unnaturally.



ATOMIC AGE TRUCKSTOP WAITRESS: Bob Fingerman's Bunny Jo saga features funny, sexy jabs at pop culture, from *Twin Peaks* to Bullwinkle. And big tits.

BAD MEAT: A weirdly tasty trip through the minds and bodies of multibreasted women and psychotic joggers, served up by Blanchard and Kegel. Prime cuts!

BIRCLAND: From Gilbert Hernandez, co-creator of *Love & Rockets*, comes this hardcore three-issue tale of strippers, psychiatrists, and big-eyed aliens.

• BETTY, OH BETTY • Three comics devoted to the ineffable Betty Page: BETTY BEING BAD is 40 pages of rarely-seen photos and a historical essay, TOR LOVE BETTY unites the two classic '50s cult characters for a brand-new adventure; and CHEAPSKIN MAGAZINE is a titillating mag of the old school, with two Betty Page stories & more!

THE BLONDIE: From Italy comes this marvelously drawn tale of bondage and espionage featuring Europe's sexiest superheroine. Don't forget the cuffs!

BOX: Mr. Madapplehead escapes Al's Asylum to find Xenia in this often super-violent metaphor for masturbation. Six issues of inspired dementia by Brian S.

BUTTERSCOTCH: Milo Manara's classic tale of an invisible peeping tom, complete with over a dozen portfolio pages never before seen in the U.S. Tasty!

CANDIDE REVEALED: Link Yaco and Simon Deliberator team up with Voltaire for this fresh and frisky new look at the adventures of an innocent a-broad.

COMMUNION: A one-night stand is explored in EROS' first comic by a male writer and female illustrator. Insightful erotica for both the hard and drenched.

EROTIC FABLES: Speaking of drenched, The Little Mermaid takes the X-rated plunge in a nice piece of tail from the creator of TimeWarriors. Fillet up!

● **EROTIC WORLDS OF FRANK THORNE** ● A six-issue series by one of the world's greatest delineators of female pulchritude. #1 features Girlia. #2 and 3 are for Moochine deJuga's fans and feature color work. #4 is a complete Lann story: #5 stars Danger Rangerette, #6 is a Red Sonja special. ALL NEW! LANN #1 picks up after EWOFT #4

● **FRAZETTA CLASSIC** ● The legendary Frank Frazetta, delineator of Conan the Barbarian, is represented in three reprints. 'BABY, YOU RE REALLY SOMETHING' spotlights his rarely seen sleazy pulp novel drawings of the '50s. UNTAMED LOVE and THUN'DA TALES collect classic comic stories from the '50s, newly recolored!

● **GRASS IS GREENER** ● SHINN collects tales of Hobo Hal and a woman finding pleasure with a disembodied penis! MAROONED is a tale of lust on a desert island in the tradition of "Swept Away." Classic underground work by Grass Green!

● **TWO FROM MORROW** ● *Amora* features the adventures of the dreamgirl of the starways, collected from two decades' worth of material; *Cosmic Kiti* is a riotous collaboration with writer Link Yaco that features a little character married to a lizard!

I WANT TO BE YOUR DOG: Set in the Black community of Toronto, this five-part thriller chronicles an interlocking set of submissive sexual relationships.

IRONWOOD: From the creator of the super-hero hit *The Elementals* comes this picaresque fantasy: Interspecies lust, iron golems, alt-girl airships, and much more!

JANE BONDAGE: THUNDERBALLS: Jane Bondage packs considerably more than a Walther PKK in this sexy secret agent satire by Samuel E. Savage

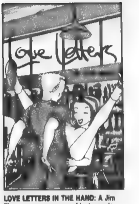
THE KINKY HOOK: Legendary bondage cartoonist Eric Stanton is reintroduced to a whole new generation in this one-shot, with additional work by Steve Ditko!

LIAISONS DELICIEUSES: Each night, the lovely proprietresses of the secret castle take a new victim to sensual heaven — for a short while. Then they kill him!

THE LIBERTINE: A cross between Zorro and Story of O, this sexual swashbuckler wields more than his sword in the two-issue series by Eddy and Brewster.

LIZ AND BETH: They're cute, they're young, they're hot, and they do everything together — everything. This one's from France, so ou la la!

LOVE BITES: Female vampires run smack and cum to suck on more than they can chew in this two issue series by Steve Sullivan and Neil Vokes.



LOVE LETTERS IN THE HAND: A Jim Thompson-esque saga of lust, murder, and betrayal from the wilds of Australia. Steamy sex and steamy violence!

LURID TALES: A ribald homage to adventure comics includes Noodle, *Jungle Princess* and a Flash Gordon parody by Bill Pearson and assorted artists

ME AND HER: From Mike Mollo's fertile imagination come these tales of a good-for-nothing hero and his gorgeous fantasy girlfriend.

THE MUSE: *I Want To Be Your Dog's* Ho Che Anderson returns with this portfolio of sophisticated erotic drawings. A class act all around!

MODERN ROMANS: The Roman gods are alive and well, enjoying sex with mortals as well as one another. Check out the wing-spanning orgasms!

PROJECT SEX: A rated X-menagerie battle Vegimale in this X-plicit satire of militant superheroes, written and drawn by Norway's rising star, Reginal

PURPLE PICTOGRAPHY: Illustrated by Vaughn Bode & Bernie Wrightson, this spectacular full-color comic will tickle your funny-boner as you marvel at the art!

● WILDER'S WORKS ● DOMINO LADY features a blonde heroine who wears a mask (and, after a few pages, not much else!); PULP DREAMS collects rare fanzine art and pin-ups, featuring buxom babes and drooling villains; REVELRY IN HELL is a campy but explicit tale of murderous dwarves rampaging through an all girls' school. Pulp it up!

R. CRUMB'S ID: Over 100 pages of sketches, cartoons, and strips from R. Crumb's private sketchbooks — many appearing here for the first time!

SEXECUTIONER: Marcia Bolens possesses the most killer sphincters on Earth, and puts them to the spy-smashing test in 3 issues galore by P. Skyler Owens!

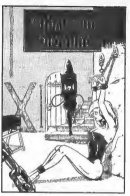
SHOOTY BEAGLE: Hot dog! Our favorite carnal canine travels through time and space in true doggie style, by Greg Budgett, Joe Zabel, and Gary Drumm.

SKINHEADS IN LOVE: It's a sexy close shave for Simone and Roy, who slam to a different beat in this sweaty hardcore threesome by Bob Fingerman.

SLUG 'N' GINGER: The cat and mouse game has never been wilder than in this collection by Milton Knight. The banana oil scene is worth the cover price alone!

SPANK: Some living dolls get all the breaks, as M. Scott Campbell's creation becomes animated with each erotic encounter. *Pinocchio* was never like this!

STIMULATOR: Eddy and Clark's science fiction story of a bored billionairess and her holographic sex toy is pure pornographic cyberpunk



SUBMISSIVE SUZANNE: Gunther von Wegen and Karl Wekerlaane bring you a too-tonic Teutonic tale of dungeon-bound domination! Achtung baby!

SUCCUBUS: Master fantasy artist Kenneth Smith provides two dozen fabulous erotic renderings — plus four full-color paintings to boot!

TALK DIRTY: Another one from those perverse Germans! This one features the last word on three-way from the one and only Matthias Schultheiss.

TIJUANA BIBLE: This three-issue series reprints those great smutty eight-pagers of yore. Your grandad would love this, but that doesn't mean you won't too!

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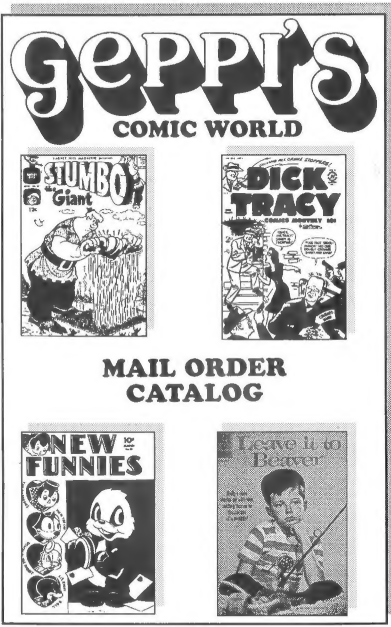

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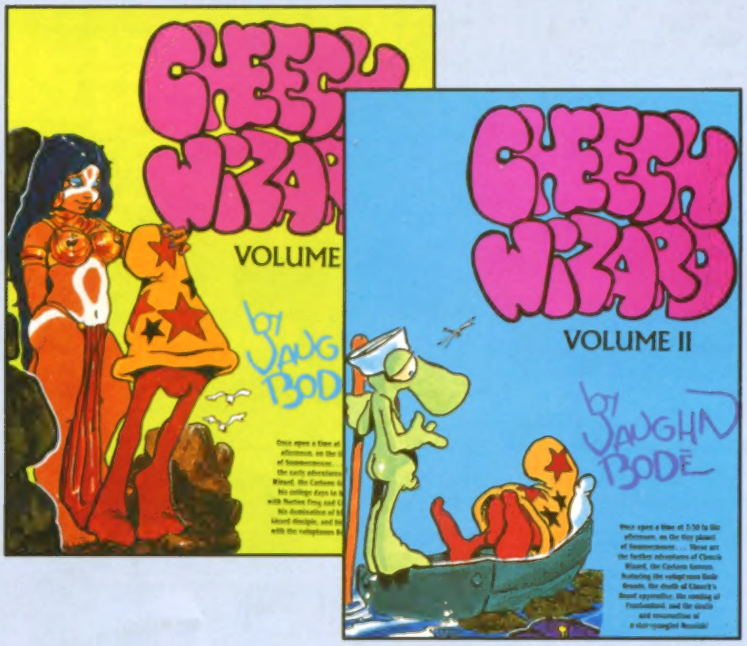

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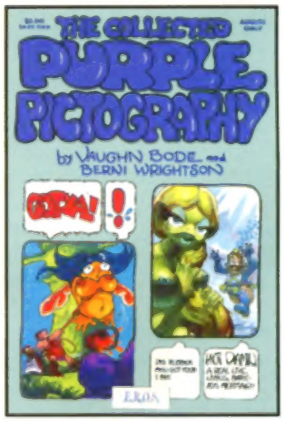

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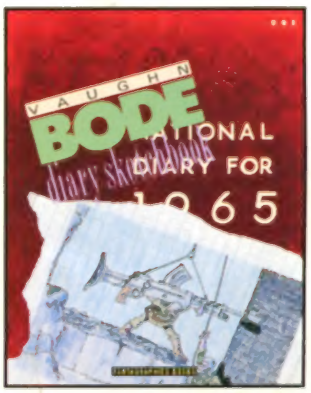

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